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Introduction

What is man? A definition and conceptualization of man is one of the questions that has provoked many debates and controversies among philosophers. Ancient Greeks, medieval theologians, modern rationalists and empiricists, postmodern philosophers- all of them have answered this question in some way. Furthermore, all existing religions have tried to elucidate the same issue. The question: “What is man?” follows every reflection on the meaning of life and the essence of the world.

Human beings are gregarious by nature and are not very different from other living beings in this respect; humans need to be part of a community, to co-exist with the others.¹ Whether a family, whether a town community, whether a nation- all these types of communities provide us with satisfaction and happiness. No one likes to be lonely, and even when one is eager to be so, this is a mental state that cannot be described as normal. However, before explaining the phenomenon of community, man needs to examine the nature of man: for, every family consists of human beings. The view of the nature of man stands in the center of every existing worldview. Humankind cannot understand the world, the universe, reality, without any comprehension of the nature of man.

Human beings are rational living beings, and they are the only ones endowed with intellect and reason. Only they are capable of asking questions about themselves. There is no other living being capable of realizing its own nature.² The essence of human intellect is the

¹ John Fiske, *The Destiny of Man Viewed in the Light of His Origin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 66.

² Jennifer Radden. *The Nature of Melancholy: from Aristotle to Kristeva* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 285.

capacity to ask questions, to find regularities in the world (laws of nature), to subject every process, phenomenon, action to analysis. The intellect is what distinguishes us from animals, it is claimed. Still, by stating simply that “man is a rational living being” nothing novel will be learned: it is already known that man is endowed with intellect; it has to be remembered that faith and morality are essential parts of human existence on earth. What should be said about them?

Faith and morality are significant characteristics of human beings. There is no other living being which is capable of realizing the existence of God! Neither dogs nor apes can grasp the concept of religious belief. Animals are endowed only with instincts; the latter helps them to survive (the estimative sense). Animals thus do not need religion. Still, human beings are religious beings. Religion postulates the reality of a Supreme Being Whose Being exceeds anything else. It claims that it is possible for man to communicate with this Supreme Being, with this Higher Intelligence.³ The religious definition of man puts him in the context of the creation of Adam and Eve: our essence is determined by the very act of Creation (cf. Gen. 1-3).

Morality is the third pillar that needs to be addressed. Although in the world of animals there are some sets of rules and practices for governing the animal community, the morality of human beings is very special and unique. It does not consist merely of a set of rules that must be obeyed. On the contrary: the basis of morality is the freedom of will. Hence everyone has the opportunity to construct his own worldview and to build his own theory of values. Everyone knows what is essential and what is not. Even though people differ widely in their understanding of what is valuable, the notion of “value” is perceived by them in the same way: values are ideals of conduct, they motivate us and help us orientate in the world.

³ Alexander S. Kohanski, *The Greek Mode of Thought in Western Philosophy* (Rutherford N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1984), 33.

Answers are needed to such questions as the following ones: What is humanity's true nature? What is the feature that distinguishes humans from all other living beings? What should be mankind's end in life? Why are humans here, in this world? Why does mankind exist? All these questions are interwoven. They require to be addressed philosophically. Science postulates theories which represent the current state of knowledge pertaining to a facet of information. However, science, as it will be proved, is not enough to sufficiently accomplish this feat of inquiry. Its proper field of work are the regularities and laws of nature. However, the whole world is not comprised by nature. It is the opposite: nature is part of the world. There is more to be analyzed and examined.

Nowadays, the conception that man is an animal which has evolved throughout the millennia is quite popular. It is taught in school; it is propagated by the media; it can be seen in many daily activities. The fruit of this faulty conceptualization has been the disastrous wars of the twentieth century. There is one important consequence of this idea: man is an animal thus he can be controlled easily by addressing his instincts, this is the philosophy of contemporary consumerism. Such an attitude can have (and indeed has) disastrous consequences. Man is a living being, but in many respects, he differs from animals. Hence, animal instincts cannot explain man's behavior and moral conduct. There should be something more. Instincts do not make us human beings. This will be proved in one of the chapters of the present report.

Keeping all this in mind, it becomes clear that the question posed, in the beginning, is of essential importance. This work will address the problem of man's nature from several points of view. Our intention is not to present dogmatically a ready-made conception which the reader should accept without criticism. What is man's nature exactly? Why is man endowed with given traits and characteristics? Does our nature determine all of our actions and ideals? What is the

connection between our brain and human thought? Is thought entirely determined by man's physiology? The answers which will be presented should prove to be engaging to the reader. It must be clear though that no one will ever be able to understand what is man's nature in the absolute sense: man is not complete being, he is still in the process of development. But unlike the theory of evolution, here it will be claimed that this development is manifested in the encounter of man with God, and not in man's evolution.

Although many views exist, it will be emphasized that there are two main views which collide with each other regarding man's nature: (1) materialism (particularly in the form of evolutionism today), and (2) the Christian/theistic view. Materialism claims that man has evolved slowly under the influence of external circumstances, and his intellect is merely a by-product of evolution. The Christian view expounds that man was created and endowed with reason and intellect and did not acquire these faculties by evolving or by means of encountering external stimuli. There is an essential difference between man's nature and animals' nature which contemporary science is not capable of comprehending and clarifying.⁴ However, to contrast, these two standpoints is not enough. As it will be shown, the materialist view can be divided into three points: evolutionism; hedonism; and rationality as a concept, materialism is too abstract, and such a division is necessitated in order to understand it.

These three points present man strictly in a materialistic light, as purely a biological being whose freedom of will and moral capacity are dependent upon his physiology and the processes going on in his organism. Of all of them, rationalism is in closest proximity to the truth, and it has some valid points to make. Still, it will be rejected in order to attain to the truth of man's nature. Man is more than an animal, more than a rational being; but what is man then?

⁴ James Porter Moreland, ed., *Debating Christian Theism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 104-111.

The right answer is hidden in a notion which is usually dismissed. Spirituality is the fourth pillar of man's essence, (but the most significant) main characteristic. It is evident that all human beings possess spirituality to some degree. Still, not everyone is capable of reaching its highest level. The ultimate level of spirituality in man is the understanding that man is destined to be with God, to co-exist with God, to partake in God's Being. The term "understanding" here does not mean intellectual process. This is a higher form of understanding: it brings together reason, faith, and feeling. Now, likewise morality, spirituality has various levels. Some people adhere more often to the established principles of morality, other people; not very often. Still, there is one fundamental difference which can be found if a comparison between morality and spirituality were conducted: spirituality gives someone joy, and morality gives a person the feeling that one has performed their duty. True happiness is rooted in spirituality, and the more "spiritual" a man is, the happier he will be!⁵

The main controversy presented in this report turns around the dichotomy between materialism and Christian theism. The first three chapters will deal with materialism in three of its versions. The report is generally divided into three main chapters to expose better the arguments for and against Christian theistic anthropology. Three chapters will deal with materialism, and the concluding two chapters, with the Christian point of view.

The first chapter introduces the reader into the current state of the controversy above. It shows the conception of man from an evolutionistic perspective. Evolutionism comprehends man regarding biology. Man is an animal and nothing more; the intellect is an essential characteristic of man, but there was a time when man did not have it. Humans are mere animals with intellect, evolutionism claims. It should be clear that evolutionism and materialism are not completely the

⁵ Hossain B. Danesh, *The Psychology of Spirituality: from Divided Self to Integrated Self* (Switzerland: Landegg Academy Press, 1997), 44-50.

same views. They differ in the fact that materialism is a whole worldview, and evolutionism deals instead with science (i.e., it is an interdisciplinary approach which unites several branches, among them biology, chemistry, geology, anthropology, etc.). When evolutionism is applied to the sphere of morality and culture, then it becomes a menace to everyone who sees man as an entity standing much higher than animals. This takes place in the philosophy of hedonism. In this subsection, hedonism will be referred to not as a specific school of philosophy (whose founder was Epicurus) but rather as a worldview, as an attitude toward morality. The chapter will analyze the conception of man from the hedonistic perspective. The hedonist worldview comprehends man regarding the pleasure principle. Man is endowed with the instinct to search for pleasure, and there is nothing beyond it, there is not another central drive, the proponents of the view claim (for instance, Sigmund Freud). One of this attitude's most dangerous consequences is the sexualization of man; man is understood only in terms of sexual relations and the pleasure principle.⁶ For example, the pro-abortion movement is subjected to the process of sexualization; it perceives women as mere sexual objects deprived of any ability to make free choices. However strange this is, pro-abortionists see women as deprived of dignity; for man's dignity requires that the life of the embryo must be saved at any rate. Abortion is thus only an exemplification of the process of sexualization; it indicates the identification of a woman with her body instead of identifying her with her personality. Women are rational agents with free will, but abortion is an unnatural act which ends the principle of organization which is constituent of the nature of woman; thus, this act objectifies women and prevents the miracle of motherhood from developing.

⁶ Benjamin Wiker, *Moral Darwinism: How We Became Hedonists* by Benjamin Wiker (2002-08-12)(Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009), 31-49.

Furthermore, the woman wanting an abortion cannot stand the burden of her freedom; she does not want to make any free choice. All she wants is to get rid of the embryo which she sees as a “burden.” This view will be countered by emphasizing the Christian understanding of man as endowed with dignity and freedom of will.

Hedonism is usually referred to as a vulgar attitude toward life, a philosophy which does not comprehend the world and its relation with man.⁷ The idea that pleasure is the only leading drive of our behavior is more than illogical. Any rationalist will see antagonism in it. However, in rationalism itself, there is a hidden menace which can shatter our idealistic worldview. For the reader, it will be quite strange to encounter a definition specifying rationalism as a version of materialism. It should be said that materialism and rationalism do not coincide all the time; rationalism is itself not materialistic. But rationalism, particularly in the form of Rene Descartes’ philosophy,⁸ defines man only regarding reason. Man is a purely intellectual being, Descartes asserts; faith and emotions and morality are not essential to his nature. This is the basis of our analysis of rationalism in the first chapter. It will be demonstrated there that this point of view marginalizes spirituality and faith, two of the main pillars of man’s identity. It is a pity that there has been an over-accentuation on man’s intellect. This is the idea that man’s nature is entirely elucidated in terms of reason. Every act, every desire, and need of man is rationally explained. The whole truth of the world can be cognized through the intellect; there is no room for faith in this philosophy and worldview. This is the core of rationalism (or, more specifically, rationalistic attitude) whose founder, according to us, is Rene Descartes. It is a form of rationalism which here is called mechanistic: for, man is seen as a machine. Not rationalism, in general, is to be

⁷ I M. Crombie, *Plato: the Midwife's Apprentice* (Routledge: R, 2014), 150.

⁸ Tom Sorell, *Descartes Reinvented* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 141.

analyzed here, but rather the view which will be called mechanistic rationalism. Auguste Comte's theory of a rationalized religion will be presented as an example of the extreme to which the rationalistic attitude can be led. William James, on the other hand, will be referred to as a vehement critic of this attitude under the form of intellectualism.

The first chapter of this report argues that man is more than an animal, more than a rational being, more than a being aspiring for pleasures. The otherness of man in comparison with animals is the presence of the spiritual substance in him- sometimes called soul, sometimes- spirit. The relation between body and soul has been discussed throughout the centuries. Two main views have been developed: monism and dualism. Monism perceives this relation as unifying, as a harmony; dualism sees it as a connection of opposites. The collision of these two views will also be addressed. A particular example will be taken: this is Manichean Gnosticism which is exceptionally dualistic. It is entirely wrong to claim that the body is evil itself, as some Gnostics and other heretics claimed in the past. This misconception has its origin in Plato's theory of the body as a "prison" or "tomb" of the soul.⁹ Centuries later, this conceptualization and anthropology were borrowed by Gnosticism (in the form of Manicheanism). The Gnostics were ontological and ethical dualists; they understood the world as consisting of two opposite parts, good and evil; spirit and matter. Everything material is evil, many of them believed. Gnosticism had serious influence over some European heresies, such as Catharism which maintained the ontological dualism between good and evil. Some mystics today (the New Age movement, theosophy, etc.) claim that only the spiritual substance of man is important and one

⁹ Todd Penner and Caroline Vander Stichele, editors., *Mapping Gender in Ancient Religious Discourses* (Biblical Interpretation) (Boston: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010), 413.

only need to take care of it and that one can neglect the physical component.¹⁰ The real problem, as it will be shown, is carnality, or the sinful desires of the body. Matter (the body) itself does not represent any problem; it is not sinful in itself. Not the body, but carnality is sinful. It should be remarked that not all Gnostics were dualists (for instance, Valentinus was a monist). For that reason, Manichean Gnosticism will be referenced which was seriously criticized by Saint Augustine of Hippo.

Man should be seen as an integrated whole, without opposing his body to his soul and spirit. The essence of man is spiritual. In order to attain to this truth, the terms “body,” “soul,” “consciousness” and “spirit” must be defined correctly. Man’s spiritual substance is often called with both names, soul, and spirit. It should be clear that the difference between soul and spirit is rooted in the fact that the soul is strictly individual, and the spirit is what connects man and God (this means, man can go beyond himself through the way of spirit; the soul is not enough to achieve this). However, the tripartite theory of man is wrong: it postulates that the spiritual substance in man has two parts, soul and spirit. Actually, they both are the same, with the only difference is that theologians describe that spirit instead as having divine origin, i.e., this is the Holy Spirit.¹¹ It will be presented as cogent that the bipartite theory is correct and what are the dangerous consequences of the tripartite account. It will be shown that man must be seen in the context of his createdness by God and his connection with the Creator.

It is true that man is a mystery. Furthermore, constant change is part of our existence. A person is not the same as they were ten years ago, for instance. Moreover, still, that person has

¹⁰ Jerald Gort, Hendrik Vroom, Rein Fernhout, and Anton Wessels, *Dialogue and Syncretism: an Interdisciplinary Approach* (Amsterdam: Eerdmans Pub Co, 1989).

¹¹ Chanté Dao, *Tripartite Realms of Existence* (Bloomington, IN: Xlibris, Corp., 2012), 20-21.

the sound reason to believe that there is something stable and immutable in them! The same is valid as of all human beings; there is something common which makes us one big family!

The point of view presented in the current report is optimistic. There are many reasons to have trust in man, to admire his abilities and capacities. A reader with a critical attitude will say that man is not as good as he is described in this report. Given all the atrocities which occurred in the 20th century, and all taking place nowadays, it is tough to say that man deserves appraisal or kudos. However, all these terrible acts have their factors and causes. It can be said objectively that man is capable of the worst atrocities and the greatest good deeds. It is up to the society itself to reduce the former and to increase the latter. It is far from logical to sit and watch passively the atrocities occurring now everywhere in the world. The only way to change it is by knowing what man's nature is. Knowledge always leads to action, and action will lead to the transformation of the society. Humanity of the future could be better, more spiritual, more altruistic.

The third chapter of this report will apply the proven thesis, that man is a composite of body and soul, which is a tenet of the Christian theistic worldview, to a ministerial system. The import of the findings of this research will be evaluated through the optic of ministry and its value to ministry within the context of the contemporary church will be definitively demonstrated.

Man from the Evolutionist, Hedonist and Rationalist Perspective

The theory of evolution claims that it is the only one theory capable of an adequate and cogent explanation of human nature.¹² The starting point of evolutionism is the idea that man is an animal; hence he should be seen first as an animal. Man has evolved through the millennia under the influence of various external factors; different stages of evolution determine his current organs, behavior, capacities, the proponents of this doctrine assert. For example, thought has appeared slowly and gradually. There was a moment in time when there was thought but at an initial and limited stage. The same can be applied to languages: initially, language consisted only of some mimics, gestures and strange sounds, without any words. Simple words (“fire,” “man,” “tree”) appeared later; and abstract words (such as “beauty,” “truth,” “good”) appeared later. Therefore, the language which one speaks now has not always been the same.

Other essential elements of human existence are also elucidated in terms of evolutionism. The traditional model of the family is comprehended as having strictly biological functions. Primitive human beings lived in caves, evolutionists say, hence men had to go out to hunt. For that reason, the men even of today have bigger salaries. In contrast, women in the past took care of the children, protecting them from various threats. Because of this, women have been seen as taking care of the children and the house. Even love is understood as an evolutionary process: primitive human beings were polygamists, whereas people today are not- this is also an effect of evolution, some scientists maintain.¹³ In short, evolutionism teaches that man’s physiology is the

¹² Dirceu Abdala, *Our Rebirth - The Probable Path of Evolution Theory* (n.p.: Biblioteca24horas, 2011), 99.

¹³ Rosemary L. Hopcroft, *Evolution and Gender: Why It Matters for Contemporary Life* (Abingdon-on-Thames: Routledge, 2015), 47-51.

basis of man's existence, and his intellectual and spiritual powers are only outcomes of his physiological evolution.

The current chapter will deal with the conception of a famous evolutionist: Ernst Haeckel. To be sure, Haeckel is radical in his explanation of man's nature by reducing man's intellect to his physiology.

Ernst Haeckel: Man is a Product of Evolution

Summary:

Haeckel is a vehement proponent of the materialistic worldview. He bases his extreme materialism on the theory of evolution and demonstrates that man is merely a machine. He puts to doubt man's freedom of will. Man is rather a machine which is controlled by the needs of his physiology.

Haeckel worked at the end of the 19th century when the theory of evolution was still not very popular. Two are the persons credited with the popularization of the theory: Thomas Huxley (in Britain) and Ernst Haeckel (in Germany). Haeckel was a proponent of physiological reductionism or the doctrine that our mental capacities are a mere function of our physiology. He adhered to the so-called militant atheism and expressed his views against Christianity and the belief in the immortality of the soul. He dedicated many his works to popularize Darwin, and at the same time to shatter the Christian worldview. In his defense of Darwin, the German biologist points out: "Feeling, evidently, rather than understanding, induces most people to combat the theory of their 'descent from Apes.'"¹⁴ As he adds: "It seems much pleasanter to be descended from a more highly developed, divine being, and hence, as is well known, human vanity has,

¹⁴ Ernst Haeckel, *The Evolution of Man*, vol. II (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1897), 445.

from the earliest times, flattered itself by assuming the original descent of the race from gods or demi-gods.”¹⁵ He accuses common people of naivety- they want to believe in fantasies instead of relying on science. Science speaks entirely in favor of the evolution theory, so there is no other possible worldview, Haeckel’s words and theories imply. However, man’s origin cannot be put into doubt, and believers must resign from their attempts to repudiate Darwin, he observes.

Furthermore, with his words, the German biologist confirms his ambition to fight against Christianity. Religion is a product of human ignorance and naivety, he claims, and science is the only way to overcome this ignorance. Because science asserts that man’s physiology dominates over his mental states, the mind should be seen merely as another physiological state of the human organism. The proof which Haeckel has found is the hypothesis that mind is directly connected with the brain; and because the brain has itself evolved considerably (as Darwin maintains¹⁶), this means that man’s mind has also evolved. Hence, it is a mere chance that humans have mental abilities at all! The mind could not have emerged under certain circumstances, it can be concluded. As Haeckel asserts: “The mind, or ‘psyche,’ of man has developed together with, and as the function of the medullary tube... so the human ‘mind,’ or the mental capacity of the entire human race, has developed gradually, step by step, from the mind of lower Vertebrates.”¹⁷ This is a view that could have been seen as scandalous in the centuries before the appearance of Darwin’s theory. Hegel and Kant would have never imagined such an explanation of the emergence of mind in the world. How is it possible that mind has evolved

¹⁵ Ibid., 445.

¹⁶ Hodge, Jonathan Hodge, Gregory Raddick, eds. (*The Cambridge Companion to Darwin*. 2nd ed. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 383.

¹⁷ Haeckel, *Evolution*, 451.

from the lower Vertebrates? The proponent of Darwinism would say: by evolution. However, there is nothing like mental abilities in the representatives of Vertebrates!

This conception of the origin of the human mind is of primary importance today. It is taught everywhere; it is published repeatedly in any book focusing on man's origin and nature. No renowned philosopher is rejecting it. This idea is simply imposed on our way of thinking. Man was made to think that without a brain, there could not be any mental activity. There is nothing beyond the body; man is taught. What can be said against this postulate of modern science?

There is not any doubt in the fact that the brain is fundamentally vital for the realization of various mental activities. Man thinks thanks to his brain; humans can carry out reflection on a given topic thanks to their brain. However, thought itself is not dependent on physiology. The way in which our thought "runs" is strictly determined by other laws which do not have anything in common with the functions of the brain. The world of thought is itself marvelous; it cannot be explained in terms of physiology.¹⁸

Evidently, when our brain is damaged to some degree, it will influence the very process of thinking. There is a disorder called dyslexia. It prevents the patient from reading properly. The patient sees the words or the letters in reversed (or chaotic) order, so he cannot read them correctly. It should be noted that there are similar disorders related to speaking and hearing. The fact that a given brain damage exercises influence over the reading process cannot be denied.¹⁹ However, the existence of thought is not to be elucidated in the context of brain activities.

¹⁸ Stanislas Dehaene, *Consciousness and the Brain: Deciphering How the Brain Codes Our Thoughts* (New York, New York: Penguin Books, 2014), 17-41.

¹⁹ Andrew W. Ellis, *Reading, Writing and Dyslexia: a Cognitive Analysis*, 2nd ed. (Hove: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1993), 44-59.

Furthermore, even if one takes it for granted that thought cannot exist separately from the brain, this does not lead necessarily to the conclusion that the human brain has evolved out of the lower Vertebrates. There is not any witness of such development; evolutionists possess only indirect evidence. Evolutionists themselves cannot explain how in the distant past there were humans that were not real humans; that there was a language which was not a language; that there was thought which was not thought at all; and so forth.

Ernst Haeckel applies the same principle to our spiritual substance. Mental states are dependent on human physiology (particularly the brain), and human spirituality is rooted in nature: “Spirit exists everywhere in nature, and we know of no spirit outside of nature... Man is not above nature, but is in nature.”²⁰ As natural beings, man has to resign from any attempt to prove that he could stand above nature in some way. This is the core of the evolutionist anthropology: man has been subjected to the process of evolution as well as all other living beings. This process is long lasting and governed by certain regularities which evolutionists claim they have discovered: “The evolution of man has taken place according to the same ‘eternal, immutable laws,’ as has the evolution of any other natural body.”²¹ Evolution is spoken of as if there is certain evidence that it is taking place. At any rate, if there are immutable laws of nature, evolution is not among them.

That is not at all offered by Haeckel. It is clear that mind and body are mutually connected, he says; but the idea that the soul is immortal should be comprehended as dualism, he claims. Monism, on the other hand, will offer a better explanation of this relation by presenting it as a union. Although he does not seem absolutely confident, Haeckel stands at the side of the so-

²⁰ Ibid., 455-6.

²¹ Ibid., 458.

called by him mechanical philosophy (or monism) which “asserts that everywhere the phenomena of human life, as well as those of external nature, are under the control of fixed and unalterable laws, that there is everywhere a necessary causal connection between phenomena.”²² This is a philosophy of radical determinism: it rejects any free will. Besides, it also denies the existence of purposefulness in nature: strict natural laws govern everything that one sees in this world, and it has already been determined. There is no room for chance, with some exceptions (related to the variations of species). To be sure, for Haeckel the theory that a supreme intellect created the world is false because there is no evidence for it. The notion of supreme intelligence should be replaced with the concept of absolute determinism, and then one will acquire a better understanding of the world, the German biologist asserts.

There is nothing really novel in mechanical philosophy as Haeckel presents it. It comprehends man as a machine which is part of a giant mechanism- the universe. There is not any need for a supreme intellect to supervise the work of the mechanism. But the idea that man’s free will is an illusion is shocking. As Haeckel puts it: “All phenomena are produced by mechanical causes (*causae efficientes*), not by pre-arranged, purposive causes. Hence there is no such thing as ‘free will’ in the usual sense.”²³ Determinism had never been led to such an extreme prior to Haeckel’s works. There was a similar conception which appeared in the works of the French thinker La Mettrie (it will be analyzed in the third chapter). However, La Mettrie’s idea was instead philosophical speculation that was not based on scientific theories. With his repudiation of man’s freedom of will, Ernst Haeckel confirms the view that man is not even an essential part of nature (not to speak that he stands above the latter). Man is a transitional link

²² Ibid., 455.

²³ Ibid., 455.

between one class of animals and another class; man will disappear in several millennia, and then nothing will have remained of him!

What then to say about man's spirituality, about man's morality? If man is "nothing special," should it be said that morality is "nothing special" as well? Kenan Malik repudiates Haeckel's view, although from a materialistic standpoint. Such kind of mechanical, or deterministic materialism is to be avoided, according to Malik. It is wrong to perceive man in the same way in which man comprehends animals: "As materialists we tend to believe that we can understand human beings, and the human mind, in the same way as we understand any other phenomena in nature...The human mind is simply a sophisticated version of the animal mind, or a sophisticated version of a machine."²⁴ It is strange to encounter such an assertion expressed by a materialist, but this only demonstrates the validity of our thesis that materialism itself is a very abstract concept that needs to be defined in more details. Mechanical philosophy, as Haeckel calls it, sees man as deprived of true freedom of will. Human's can only believe that our decisions are absolutely free, that our organism and physiology do not have a dominant influence over our thought; that our worldview is not affected by our physiological problems and defects. Haeckel would say here that even a strong migraine could affect the way in which one sees the world, an assertion showing the absurdity of mechanistic materialism correctly.

Man is unique in many respects, and even materialists should respect this. Malik observes the following: "Human beings are exceptional beings, not simply unique in the sense that every species is unique, but exceptional in that humans cannot be understood solely as natural beings. The rejection of human exceptionalism is not a materialist, but a mechanistic outlook."²⁵ This

²⁴ Kenan Malik, "Materialism, Mechanism, and the Human Mind," 31 May 2007, par. 1 (accessed August 1, 2018) <https://newhumanist.org.uk/articles/466/materialism-mechanism-and-the-human-mind>

²⁵ Ibid., par. 2.

view presents a softer version of materialism, a materialistic philosophy admitting that there is a real distinction between man's physiology and man's spiritual activities, among them being morality.

If men were machines or mere mechanisms, then they should have been treated as objects. If men are seen as objects, then they should be understood as non-persons. This will have terrible consequences in our life. Can one imagine a society consisting entirely of robots (for example as described by Isaac Asimov in his famous stories about robots)? What would their existence look like? Man is not only a material thing; man is personality. The latter is hard to be explained merely in terms of evolution theory. There is no animal which is endowed with similar traits. One cannot say that our dog is a person. Of course, it may have some peculiarities which make it different from the other dogs; my dog can also easily recognize me. However, my dog is not able to reflect on its actions and behavior; it cannot understand the difference between good and evil. My dog is capable only of reacting to my commands which tell it that a specific action is correct, and another move is wrong. Man, on the contrary, goes beyond the dichotomy between right and wrong. He attributes truth, beauty, or goodness to the things which he encounters. Our dog will never understand these three concepts; only goodness can be grasped by it in some way (that a particular action is preferable).

Malik is right then to assert that it is entirely wrong to consider man as a mere animal. Man is a subject and must be treated only as a subject: "So long as researchers treat humans as if we were simply objects, and not as subjects, then they will face a major conceptual obstacle in their understanding of what it is to be human."²⁶ What Malik means here is the fact that science always analyzes its objects entirely as objects. Biology, chemistry, physics; all these sciences

²⁶ Ibid., par. 20.

define man as an object. That is, man has certain objective traits and attributes. But what are the essential differences between human beings? What makes mankind so unique? Why am I not you, or her, or him? Why do my needs, interests, desires, and dreams differ from those of the other human beings? This cannot be clarified by biology and the other natural sciences. Actually, it is not their task: psychology and philosophy (including ethics) should deal with such issues. It is a disappointment that some people have so much trust in science that they cannot understand the fact that science cannot explain man's nature in an absolute, complete way: as long as humans are persons, they are not analyzable by natural sciences, at least if their classical methods are employed.

This shows quite well the difference between science and the materialist worldview. Yes, natural sciences today may have elaborated some theories defining man in the light of his physiology. However, this should not lead to adopting or sanctioning the materialist worldview automatically. Natural sciences deal only with facts; it is not their business to define what is personality, what is "self," why everyone is different from the other human beings. Furthermore, natural sciences are not able to grasp the spiritual and personal growth of human beings. Biology is far from any understanding of man's transcendence, that is, man's capability to go beyond himself, to change, to grow. Plenty of philosophers of the 19th and 20th century have developed this idea; that man should not be comprehended as entirely static being, as having an immutable essence. Man should rather be understood as having an essence which is changing itself. For instance, in spite of the consecutive development of time, an individual will not become someone else, but will progress organically. As Malik remarks: "To talk of humans as 'transcendent' is not to ascribe to them spiritual properties. It is, rather, to recognise that as subjects we have the ability to transform our selves, our natures, our world, an ability denied to any other physical

being”²⁷. If one ignores the first sentence of the given quote, they would absolutely agree with what Malik asserts: that it is self-transformation (or, going beyond our limitations) which is typical of human beings, and only of human beings. Whether it will be named “spiritual” or not, the fact is that the future development of our personality cannot be predicted.

Is Malik right that not every materialist adheres to mechanical philosophy (Haeckel), and that some materialists can assume the existence of man’s personality and even accept the reality of the soul? Yes, he is entirely correct: materialism is very diverse, and what unifies all materialists (and branches of materialism) is the thesis that the human soul ceases to exist with the body. At any rate, the extreme form of materialism which claims that man is merely a machine and nothing more must be criticized and repudiated in every possible case.

The current section does not exhaust all possible versions of evolutionism. There are a few standard features which are typical of the evolutionist understanding of man:

1. There definitively was a time when man was not man; some of his abilities (mental ones, for instance) were not well developed at that time.

2. Man’s past (i.e., earlier stages of his evolution) have their apparent consequences even today (for example, the division of tasks between husband and wife, or the social positions of men and women).

3. Man’s psychic power, faculties, and abilities must be explained only in terms of physiological reductionism; all psychical activities are controlled by the brain and have their source only in the brain.

4. Morality is based on man’s instincts and is only partially modified thanks to the intellect (through self-reflection).

²⁷ Malik, par. 7.

The evolutionist worldview is materialist in its essence. It ignores the spiritual abilities of man. Besides, morality is not properly explained- instead of teaching what is bad and what is evil, morality is defined in terms of survival. Evolutionism remains a theory unproven with direct evidence, and it must be perceived as a particular worldview, not as a real scientific theory. However, there is another dimension of materialism that is partially connected with evolutionism- the idea that our instincts guide our actions, and the center of these instincts is the pleasure principle.

Man from the Hedonist Perspective

Summary:

This subchapter presents the history of hedonism in short. It then subjects to analysis Freud's psychoanalytical theory, which is based on the pleasure principle and the idea that the sexual drive is the most important impulse in human beings.

Another dimension of materialism is its emphasis on the pleasure principle or the conception that physiological pleasure should be taken as the highest moral ideal. This attitude will be named hedonism, although this term can cover various ideas, from more radical ones to moderate forms of a disposition for pleasure. Why is this attitude interesting to our study? Hedonism is not merely immoral. It can be dangerous to any society with its stress put on individual well-being. Especially today, hedonism is embodied in the philosophy of consumerism. The latter system is based on the assumption that "only what is pleasant counts." Pleasant things are sold and bought; they are traded. If something is not enjoyable, then it should be avoided. At some moment, the adherent to hedonism will become tired of everything and

maybe will seek to end his/her life. A life based entirely on the search for pleasure is a wasted life. Now, let's turn to the basic principles of hedonism.

Hedonism: Pleasure is Summum Bonum

When one hears the word “hedonism,” one thinks mostly of Epicureans.²⁸ One calls Epicureans people living a comfortable life, deprived of severe troubles, or people that live for the moment (i.e., they do not care about what will happen tomorrow). Hedonism is merely an abstract term which can cover various ideas and theories. It mainly deals with ethics, and it tries to answer the questions: What should one strive for? What should be our ideals in life? Hedone is the Greek word for pleasure.²⁹ Ancient Greeks that adhered to this ethical doctrine believed that one should try to live a life full of joys. Some Greeks were convinced that one must control one's desires to some degree (Aristippus); others became cynics (like Diogenes); the third group of philosophers believed that pleasure is the absence of pain and suffering, which was the position of the founder of hedonism, Epicurus.³⁰ It is hard thus to define strictly what hedonism is. In the context of the current report, hedonism will be presented mainly in its Freudian context, i.e., the idea that every living being, including man, strives for pleasure. Because he was not a

²⁸ Epicurus, *Principal Doctrines* (S.I.: LULU.Com, 2017), 13-18.

²⁹ Julia Cresswell, *Oxford Dictionary of Word Origins* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 152.

³⁰ Sharon Weisser and Naly Thaler, *Strategies of polemics in Greek and Roman philosophy* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2016), 130.

philosopher, Freud never elaborated ethics of hedonism. Still, hedonism is the logical consequence of his work in the field of psychoanalysis.

The ancient Greek philosopher Aristippus was one of the founders of hedonism. He lived in the pre-Socratic era when ethical issues were still not of primary significance. Greek philosophers then were interested mainly in ontology (Heraclitus, Democritus, etc.). It is not very certain what precisely the philosopher taught; contemporary scholarship only knows from Diogenes Laertius and Aristotle that he argued for pleasure as the moral ideal. As one of the modern researchers of hedonism, Ole Moen observes in his article: “Some interpret Aristippus as holding a very radical position: that we should be indifferent to the future and live only for the present. To make a case for such an interpretation, Terence Irwin argues that Aristippus was most likely skeptical of the idea of a lasting self.”³¹ Hedonism thus was connected with anthropology: the view of man as a short-lasting being which is mortal, and therefore should live as intensively as possible. It should be clear though that hedonism was in no sense an ontology; it merely reflected upon some ethical issues.

Strangely enough, in Plato, some traces of hedonism can be identified, although very moderate ones. As Moen remarks, in some early works of Plato, hedonism (the pleasure principle) is partially defended (Protagoras, Gorgias). On the other hand, in *Philebus* hedonism is attacked.³² It is true that pleasure was referred to in some of Plato’s works as one of the most important values. Still, it was somehow related to attaining to the truth: to contemplate truth is a pleasant activity. Plato instead spoke of pleasure in a moral sense, than in a physiological one. This is the pleasure which one feels while reading an interesting book, or while staring at a

³¹ Ole Moen, “Hedonism before Bentham,” *Journal of Bentham Studies* 17(2015): 3. (accessed 1 August 2018) http://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/1469354/1/017_-_Moen.pdf

³² *Ibid.*, 4-5.

beautiful painting, or while listening to a beautiful melody. At any rate, Socrates' teaching formulated the idea that it is The Good to which one should aspire, and not physiological pleasures. For, the latter is only temporary, and they can distract us from the truth about the world- that the material world is only an imperfect "copy" of the ideal world. Therefore, physiological pleasures are obstacles to the possibility to attain to this ideal world. As Moen remarks regarding a passage found in The Republic: "Even though Socrates (or at least the late Socrates) was not a hedonist, he does claim, in the Republic, that the best of all lives- the philosopher's life- is also the most pleasant life... It is in part by virtue of being the best life that a philosopher's life is the most pleasant."³³ Therefore, Plato cannot be considered as a hedonist: philosophy itself is the highest pleasure.

Epicurus was perhaps the most influential self-admitted hedonist. It is true still that he defined pleasure as the absence of suffering. Therefore, the very concept of an Epicurean lifestyle is wrong. As Moen points out: "Epicurus is sometimes dubbed a negative hedonist. A negative hedonist is one who, in some respect, holds that it is more important to avoid pain than to attain pleasure...One possible interpretation of this is that Epicurus takes pleasure to be identical with the absence of pain."³⁴

Furthermore, Epicurus did not adhere to the assumption that one should aspire for various physiological pleasures throughout his life. On the contrary: "According to Epicurus the best life is a plain and simple one where one's well-being is not dependent on extravagant material goods."³⁵ Here philosophy can also help: it can demonstrate the transitoriness of suffering or the

³³ Ibid., 6.

³⁴ Ibid., 9.

³⁵ Ibid.

fact that every suffering will pass and will be replaced by pleasure someday. Ole Moen remarks the following: “Being a full-fledged hedonist, Epicurus holds that the proper aim of every human undertaking...is to avoid pain and, if possible, to secure pleasure. Although philosophical inquiry can hardly free us from bodily pains... it can, in Epicurus’ view, free us from pains that originate in the mind.”³⁶ This view was shared by some Stoics who believed that most of our troubles arise in our mind. By changing our attitude toward the world, we will achieve tranquility and peace of mind; the state called ataraxia.³⁷ It is exciting then to see some similarities between two doctrines which are held to be opposite- hedonism and stoicism.

Speaking about ancient hedonism, one cannot help but think of the Book of Ecclesiastes. Some interpreters of the book claim that it contains both skeptical and hedonistic ideas. This report argues for a reasonable search for pleasures, which can be shown to say that pleasure should not be our ultimate end in life. This is not hedonism and should not be defined as such. Let’s turn to some passages of the inspired book to prove our thesis.

Hedonists quote Ecclesiastes (5:18-19) which states, “it is good and proper for a man to eat and drink.” Such a statement could be easily interpreted as an argument in favor of hedonism. Ecclesiastes argues in favor of gaining material goods, of striving for physiological pleasures, someone might claim. However, this interpretation is wrong. What Ecclesiastes wants to say is the following: our life is short, and it is good to have some joy in it, but one must be aware of the fact that this joy comes from God. God has planned everything as to endow man with the possibility to feel pleasure and joy. As it is written in the following passage:

I know that there is nothing better for

³⁶ Ibid., 10.

³⁷ Joseph Agassi, *Science in Flux* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 2012), 455.

men than to be happy and do good
while they live.
That everyone may eat and drink, and
find satisfaction in all his toil- this is the
gift of God (Eccl. 3:12-13).

The phrase “to be happy and do good” is of crucial significance here. It means that one is happy when one does good, and happiness without good deeds is impossible. The idea that happiness should be our ultimate moral end is not in proximity with the tenets of hedonism; it is called eudaemonism, or the ethical doctrine elaborated by Aristotle.³⁸ It posits happiness as the highest end in life. Happiness can be achieved not only by striving for pleasure, but one can be happy by doing good, or by partaking in God, or by helping others. Still, Ecclesiastes is not even a eudemonist; for, he rejects the idea above of happiness as the ultimate end of one’s life. This can be seen in the following passage:

I denied myself nothing my eyes
desired; I refused my heart no pleasure.
My heart took delight in all my work, and
this was the reward for all my labor.
Yet when I surveyed all that my hands
had done and what I had toiled to
achieve, everything was meaningless, a
chasing after the wind; nothing was
gained under the sun (Eccl. 2:10-11).

The material benefits of life do not bring any pleasure, Ecclesiastes is eager to say. He admits that all projects he has carried out turned out to be meaningless; for, they turn around transitory objects, around things which today are here, and tomorrow will cease to exist. What is the sense then to have all these material things? Why build houses, why to have a family? These words are sad, but they have some truth in them. In reality, Ecclesiastes tells his story of how

³⁸ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 2nd ed., trans. Terence Irwin (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett Pub. Co., 1999), 182.

naive he was when he thought that material possessions and benefits could make him happy. Then he became a skeptic, thinking that everything is meaningless. Finally, he found that one can be satisfied by doing good; and that pleasures are not enough for one to feel satisfied. At least physiological pleasures cannot perform this task. Happiness is still achievable, Ecclesiastes assures us; but one needs to be careful when giving ourselves to it to achieve alacrity and meaning in life. He advises young people the following:

Be happy, young man, while you are young, and let your heart give you joy in the days of your youth. Follow the ways of your heart and whatever your eyes see, but know that for all these things God will bring you to judgment (Eccl. 11:9).

With these words, Ecclesiastes instructs us to be moderate in pleasure, to reflect more on the fact that man is mortal, and that someday he will be judged by the Lord: “know that for all these things God will bring you to judgment.” Young people often forget about the future, about the reality of God; they live joyfully, but without taking into account the moral principle that one should not go too far in one’s entertainment. For that reason, the wise author of Ecclesiastes instructs them to respect the principles of morality and not to forget about God Who can see every single one of their deeds?

Pleasure, joy, and suffering are thus seen as a part of our life. This is the cornerstone of Ecclesiastes’ wisdom. However, the most important thing for us is always to be aware of the reality of God, and of the requirements set by His Commandments. Let’s enjoy, Ecclesiastes says, but enjoy moderately, without extremes. This is not hedonism, and it does not have anything to share with Aristippus or Epicurus. It reflects the optimism typical of ancient Jews with their belief that wealth and happiness are God’s blessing and granted to those who merit

them. This optimism has proved that ancient Jews had a positive view of the future and the fact that God will reward every righteous person.

Hedonism was put under severe criticism during the Middle Ages. The Christian understanding of human life perceives suffering as an essential part of our existence in this world. Pleasure is thus seen negatively, and hedonism is wholly repudiated. During the period called the Renaissance, some hedonistic attitudes re-appeared, and there is nothing strange in this. Somewhere on the borderline between the Renaissance and the modern era is where to meet the works of Pierre Gassendi, the first modern hedonist. Even Gassendi was not a true hedonist. What is strange, Gassendi was not an atheist! This is remarked by Moen as follows: “Gassendi was a Christian, and God plays an important role in the universalization. By creating Heaven and Hell, God has made sure that, ultimately, there is no conflict between self-interest and the greater good, because good deeds are rewarded and bad deeds are punished.”³⁹ Is this rather eudemonism, and not hedonism? The idea that human beings need pleasant experiences in their life is completely normal; it does not go to extremes. In comparison with Freud, Gassendi’s ideas seem partially hedonistic. This will be shown later in the present subchapter. Still, all of them are labeled hedonists.

There is no doubt that hedonism can also be comprehended as an anthropological theory. It understands man as a natural being which needs pleasures and is driven by the pleasure principle. Many hedonists were also either atheists or materialists, although to different degrees. This fact is seen by Ole Moen who notices that all need to pay heed to “hedonism’s close ties to materialism and empiricism. These links make sense historically, for Democritus, Epicurus, Lucretius, and Gassendi were arguably the four most central figures in the early development of

³⁹ Moen, *Hedonism*, 14.

materialism and empiricism.”⁴⁰ This is the reason for arguing that hedonism is one of the forms of materialism. Still, not every materialist is a hedonist.

Ancient hedonism has been explained as well as the assumable hedonism present in the Book of Ecclesiastes. The former held that man should search for pleasures in his life on earth; but Ecclesiastes teaches us that no one should forget about God, about God’s Wisdom and God’s Justice. Hence, hedonism is not apparent, promoted or defended in Ecclesiastes. Hedonism can be found in the works of the famous psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud. The Freudian type of hedonism is more radical than the ancient one. How can this radical hedonism be defined, and why is it called “Freudian”? The truth is that Freud himself never elaborated a hedonistic theory. Freud was a psychologist, which means that he was interested in the structure, functions, and organization of human psychics. He built upon the ideas of some philosophers, such as Arthur Schopenhauer, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Edward von Hartmann, according to whom the unconscious often dominates over the self, over our consciousness. Rationalists like Hegel thought that everything in the world could be explained rationally; that man is entirely a rational being; that the intellect is all. The work of the philosophers mentioned above demonstrated that our psychic has another, unknown part that needs to be studied more carefully. Human consciousness is only what one sees at the surface; but what is under the surface? Instincts, someone might answer. Still, the term “instincts” does not correspond to reality here. Animals have instincts; they are always guided by the latter. Man can overcome his instincts and even reject them. This is the reason for the introduction of the term “drives.” Freud spoke more about drives and avoided employing the word “instincts” regarding human beings. What does stand at the core of his theory?

⁴⁰ Ibid., 18.

It is well known that Freud was the founder of psychoanalysis. His primary assumption is the following: the unconscious (he calls it subconscious, but both mean the same) reveals itself through various ways: gestures; dreams; slips of the tongue. All mental (psychological) problems are rooted in the subconscious. The content of his subconscious must be acknowledged and addressed in treating a patient. Because it is not possible to enter that realm directly, one has to interpret the symbols that the subconscious “uses” to manifest its contents.⁴¹

In this regard, Freud is absolutely right- the existence of the subconscious and the fact that it “speaks” to us with symbols is indisputable. Nevertheless, the Austrian psychoanalyst goes further. He asserts that the contents found in the sphere of the subconscious are mainly sexual. Having some experience with patients suffering from hysteria or neuroses, Freud noticed that the majority of them had some sexual problems or abnormality. The conclusion was definite: the sexual drive is at the bottom of every neurosis and most psychological illnesses.

However, it is not very clear how the neurosis is brought about by the sexual drive. Here Freud elaborates a theory which is not supported by any evidence; it is somewhat of a hypothetical character. According to Freud, there is a conflict between the personality (self) and the sexual drive. The reality itself imposes some restrictions on the self; then the self tries to impose them in turn on the subconscious (or Id). As Freud puts it in his article “Neurosis and psychosis”: “The transference neuroses originate from the ego’s refusing to accept a powerful instinctual impulse existing in its id and denying it motor discharge, or disputing the object towards which it is aimed. The ego then defends itself against the impulse by the mechanism of

⁴¹ Paul Erickson and Liam Murphy, Liam, *A History of Anthropological Theory* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 75.

repression.”⁴² Writing about “instinctual impulse,” Freud refers to the pleasure principle or the assumption that human beings are led by the desire to gain pleasure in every possible situation. Nevertheless, sometimes gaining pleasure can be dangerous to one’s life or health. In other cases, it is forbidden by the rules regulating the specific society. Then the ego is forced to suppress the sexual drive, and neurosis emerges: “In the service of its super-ego and of reality the ego has come into conflict with its id.”⁴³ The super-ego is nothing but morality, as Freud defines it. It is involved in every conflict between the ego and Id; it gives instructions to the ego. In such cases, the ego tries to prevent the sexual drive from realizing its desire. The ego, in turn, is not absolutely victorious. Its actions ensue in misbalance in one’s psychics, which means that there is tension, that there is a conflict within. The ego is frustrated, or dissatisfied, with all consequences of this: “There always remains as a common feature in the aetiology both of the psychoneuroses and the psychoses the factor of frustration.”⁴⁴ There are two ways then for the ego (self): to transform the sexual drive into something socially acceptable (or the process called by Freud sublimation), or to transform itself to reduce the tension (then neuroses and other illnesses appear). Sublimation is the better option, of course, for it leads to great achievements in the fields of art, science, religion, etc. The tension between the ego and Id accumulates energy that needs to be released; and this occurs when one writes a poem, draws a painting, or constructs a new machine, or when one rules a country. The other option is dangerous to both the individual and the society. As Freud observes: “It is always possible for the ego to avoid a rupture in any of its relations by deforming itself, submitting to forfeit something of its unity, or

⁴² Sigmund Freud, “Neurosis and Psychosis,” in *Collected Papers*, vol. II, ed. by Joan Riviere (London: Hogarth Press, Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1956), 251.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 251.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 253.

in the long run even to being gashed and rent.”⁴⁵ This means that the ego prefers to become subordinated but to maintain its integrity, instead of breaking all the rules and dissolving itself. The social norms and the regulations of the society are quite strong; the individual cannot overcome them easily. The easier option is to adhere to these social norms.

Where does the idea that our subconscious is entirely governed by the pleasure principle come from? It is actually a pure hypothesis. If one observes a baby, they will see how it always tries to gain or experience some pleasure (by eating, by playing with toys, etc.). When the pleasure is denied (for example, food is not readily available for the baby, and it needs to wait a little longer), the baby starts crying. Humans can think then that the pleasure principle leads the baby. The baby’s organism is still not well developed. The baby is not capable of taking care of itself. Its organism has a unique “system” which helps the baby survive. It feels pleasure when it satisfies its biological needs. Without the pleasant feelings at these moments, the baby would be unable to realize that it is hungry, that it needs sleep, and so forth. Its mother would also be in the dark because the baby would not show her any sign of hunger or anything else. It is the same with adults. The more experience a person has, the more he knows that pleasure is a good thing, but it is rare (i.e., it is not possible to gain it, and if one achieves it, it does not last long). For that reason, people have formed certain habits which help us gain pleasure (smoking, drinking coffee, or other activities). Man is still not led entirely by these habits: our goal in life is not smoking, is not drinking coffee, is not to perform sexual activities, and so on. These activities provide us with pleasure from time to time. Humanity cannot be led all the time by them; had one had the opportunity to gain pleasure every single moment, then pleasure would be deprived of its meaning. It would become boring! This is what Freud is not aware of. In short: Freud identifies

⁴⁵ Ibid., 254.

our instincts with the sexual drive; and the sexual drive is seen as identical with the pleasure principle. When pleasure has transformed itself into habit, it is no longer pleasure.

is based upon the suppression of the sexual drive, i.e., of the pleasure principle. Pleasure should only be moderate, although our subconscious (the drives within it) strives for pleasure all the time. As Freud asserts: “Our civilization is... founded on the suppression of instincts. Each individual has contributed some renunciation.”⁴⁶ This, of course, is not only of a negative character, as Freud says: through sublimation, great achievements were made possible. Freud does not recommend anything regarding our moral conduct; he, as he claims, only presents facts to the audience. Still, the way in which the Austrian psychologist provides us with these facts is manipulative. For example, the following statement is doubtful: “The sexual instinct in man does not originally serve the purposes of procreation, but has as its aim the gain of particular kinds of pleasure.”⁴⁷ Likewise, can be said that the pleasure one feels when eating after a long period of abstinence from any food is the only aim of the process of eating! Alternatively, when one drinks water, the sole objective of this act is to feel pleasure instead of providing our organism with this so essential resource! Freud here misinterprets the function of pleasure in such actions. The truth is the opposite: the sexual instinct aims at procreation; but in the course of time, it has been transformed into an opportunity for entertainment. Still, this strictly depends on the particular society, culture and period. The observations of Freud only concern Western civilization, and more precisely, what he witnessed in Vienna, the capital of a vast empire at that time (Austria-Hungary). One has to be very critical toward his theory which today proves to be wrong.

⁴⁶ Sigmund Freud, “‘Civilized’ Sexual Morality and Modern Nervousness,” in *Collected Papers*, vol. II, ed. by Joan Riviere (London: Hogarth Press, Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1956), 82.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 83.

Let us turn again to the problem of frustration and suppression. When the instinct (especially the sexual drive) is suppressed, the ego is frustrated- it can become angry, sad, or nervous. This frustration can lead to negative ramifications: “A certain degree of direct sexual satisfaction appears to be absolutely necessary for by far the greater number of natures, and frustration of this variable individual need is avenged by manifestations which... we must regard as illness.”⁴⁸ What he means here is the emergence of neuroses: neurosis results from the collision between ego and Id, between desires and reality. According to Freud, this is due especially to the suppression of the sexual drive: “The sexual factor is the essential one in the causation of the true neuroses.”⁴⁹ This is the only principle that Freud never gave up.

Is Freud right to claim that the sexual factor is the primary cause of neurosis? Our collective experience says this is not so. Man experiences many troubles, worries, and problematic situations in our life. Sexual dissatisfaction is only one among many shortcomings and disappointments. The cause of neurosis is the conflict between our desires and dreams, on the one hand, and reality, on the other. However, our desires are not only of a sexual essence. They can be connected with our professional career, with desiring a well-paying job, with establishing a family, with pursuing an education, and so forth. Sexual issues are merely one small part of all that one can feel a need for. Biological needs have to be satisfied, and this is normal; but why should man prioritize only one of them? It will be explicated a little bit later that Freud has predicted the future sexualization of our (Western) society, however strange this may seem. He opposes culture to nature (morality to instincts, super-ego to Id) and asserts: “The injurious influence of culture reduces itself in all essentials to the undue suppression of the

⁴⁸ Ibid., 83.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 81.

sexual life in civilized peoples (or classes) as a result of the ‘civilized’ sexual morality which prevails among them.”⁵⁰ Civilization is founded upon suppression of our instincts, and more precisely on man’s sexual drive. The result of it is sublimation, which is typical of human beings and does not exist in any other living being: “The sexual instinct... is probably more strongly developed in man than in most of the higher animals... (it has) the ability to displace its aim without materially losing in intensity.”⁵¹ In short, instead of focusing our efforts on sexual intercourse, man is driven by his super-ego to focus ourselves on a completely different activity, such as art, culture, and so forth.

If one asks where the super-ego comes from, Freud has his answer ready, as written in the article “The economic problem in Masochism.” As he puts it: “It originated through the introjection into the ego of the first objects of the libidinal impulses in the id, namely, the two parents, by which process the relation to them was desexualized, that is, underwent a deflection from direct sexual aims.”⁵² Freud hypothesizes that even a newborn baby has sexual instincts and desires. Also, because the parents are the people with whom it communicates most often (actually, all the time), the baby directs his sexual wishes on them. These wishes, as Freud remarks, are not mature and they exist only in an initial and underdeveloped condition. The baby thus directs its desires either to the mother or the father, depending on its sex. Boys are attracted to their mother, according to Freud. This is mere attraction, which means that they feel affection toward their mother, and not real sexual desires (which even for Freud is something unthinkable). The presence of the father then is seen by the boy as a threat to its relation to their

⁵⁰ Ibid., 80.

⁵¹ Ibid., 82.

⁵² Sigmund Freud, “The Economic Problem in Masochism,” in *Collected Papers*, vol. II, edited by Joan Riviere (London: Hogarth Press, Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1956), 264.

mother. The boy feels jealousy, Freud says, and then the Oedipus complex appears. This complex is rooted in the jealousy of the boy and the latter's desire to be the only one who is permitted to communicate with the mother. In this manner, morality is brought about: "The Oedipus-complex proves itself... to be the origin of morality in each one of us."⁵³ The boy gradually learns how to deal with his mother and father; he becomes aware of the fact that he should not direct his desires toward his mother. This phenomenon takes place during the process of solidification of its super-ego, or morality.

This conception is rooted in Freud's belief that children also have sexual desires but in an unconscious form. In his article, Freud writes as follows: "It is commonly believed that the sexual instinct is lacking in children, and only begins to arise in them when the sexual organs mature. This is grave error... The new-born infant brings sexuality with it into the world."⁵⁴ He adds, "the child is long before puberty a being capable of mature love, lacking only the ability for reproduction."⁵⁵ Building upon such an assumption, Freud concludes that there is something like an internal conflict in the boy's psychics, which originates in the desire to "possess" his mother for his entire life. The same is valid of girls: they direct their desires to the father and perceive their mothers as "rivals."

Freud's conception is absurd, but it must be analyzed in order to show its falsity. The following points can be proposed in order to repudiate Freud's theory of children's sexuality and the existence of the Oedipus complex:

⁵³ Ibid., 264-265.

⁵⁴ Sigmund Freud, "The Sexual Enlightenment of Children," in *Collected Papers*, vol. II, edited by Joan Riviere (London: Hogarth Press, Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1956), 38.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 39.

1. The term “sexuality” cannot be applied to children because then it becomes meaningless. The term “pre-sexuality” could be used instead. Nevertheless, with this use, Freud wants to convince his readers that children are not very different from adults in this respect.

2. The sexual drive exists in all human beings, but in children, it is only in an initial stage. Children do not have sexual desires or anything similar to them. Freud could not provide us with any proof that such desires exist. All he presents to us is solely his reflections and hypotheses.

3. The desire of little children to be in constant contact with their parent of the opposite sex can be easily and simply explained in the case with boys: the mother is the most important human being in the life of a little child, whether a boy or a girl. Freud’s assumption of the existence of the Oedipus complex does not take into consideration this fact. Actually, for little girls, the mother is similarly the most important person. It is scientifically proven that during the first two years of the little child’s life the figure of the father is almost insignificant. The “jealousy” felt by the boys thus finds its clarification: the boy merely wants to be loved constantly by his mother. The father is not a “threat”; he is rather perceived as not of vital importance in the life of the little boy.

4. Not every boy has such a close relationship with his mother. This depends on the mother’s character, her presence in the life of the boy, etc. The same role can be played by the grandmother or even the nanny sometimes. This fact completely repudiates Freud’s idea of any “sexual attraction” between mother and child (boy).

5. Sexual desires can emerge during puberty, at the earliest. They cannot appear earlier, simply because this is the constitution of our organism and physiology. There cannot be any “sexual objects,” “sexual desires,” or anything like that during childhood.

In brief, Freud takes a healthy relationship between a mother and a child and subjects it to sexualization, i.e., tries to explain this relation in term by referring to sexual drives and desires. The desire of the baby to be loved by its parents then is presented as an “immature sexual desire.” The reader can easily understand the absurdity of this all.

We can still ask, If this is so absurd, why does Freud believe in it? Is he that perverse? Is he intentionally provocative?

First, this is only his conviction. Freud did a great job when dealing with adult patients. He discovered some of the causes of their psychological and psychiatric problems. Nevertheless, his dealings with children were utterly inadequate. He tried to understand children as similar to adults. This is the most severe drawback of his psychoanalytical theory. Children are children, and adults are adults; the psychologists and psychiatrists of today still respect this differentiation. Children cannot be respected as adults and they cannot be dealt with as such.

Second, Freud discovered the fact that children have an innate understanding or unconscious concept of what sexual activity is. Unfortunately, some children become witnesses to the relations of their parents; or of other persons. This is reflected in the contents of their subconscious. They start asking themselves questions regarding what they have seen. Because they have already partially developed their super-ego (sense of morality), children try to suppress these questions. Children feel that what they have seen is “disgusting,” or “terrible.” This can be the cause of severe traumas and future psychological difficulties.

Third, Freud wanted to provoke and draw the public’s attention to some sexual problems existing at his time. In Vienna, at the beginning of the 20th century, these problems were taboo. He thus succeeded in provoking discussions among academics regarding these issues, and there have been positive results of the debates and subsequent research.

Freud himself predicted that the taboo imposed on sexual problems and sexuality, in general, would continue for decades. This prediction turned out to be wrong. The Western society changed so much that it returned to its foundation; rationalism. The anti-rationalism and anti-intellectualism had been a whole set of various activities, practices, attitudes, and ideologies which emerged after the Second World War. Most importantly (with regards to the topic of the present report), it has involved intensified sexualization, or what was called at its onset, “sexual freedom.” Freud can be taken as standing (conceptually) in proximity to this set of processes. Sexualization is the topic of the next part of this subchapter.

Sexualization and Abortion

Summary:

This subchapter demonstrates the connection between hedonism and sexualization. The process of sexualization is based on practices and convictions which stand close to the philosophy of hedonism. Because sexualization comprises too many practices, ideas, ways of behavior, and so forth, only abortion will be taken as its exemplification.

In the current subchapter, a term will be employed which can be interpreted in diverse ways- sexualization. It is true that this term has not as of yet been defined completely. Here it will be described as the social and cultural process which identifies man’s nature with sexuality. Sexuality, in turn, comprises man’s sexual drive, activities, knowledge, and convictions. Man is seen essentially as a sexual human being, i.e., its existence turns around sexual acts, practices, convictions, interactions, and so forth. His feelings, emotions, and even thoughts are heavily influenced by the sexual drive.

The reader can object that such a definition is way too abstract and it actually does not provide us with any new information. Human beings, even nowadays, have other issues to discuss and reflect upon- education, job, military conflicts and threats, family life. Are all these related to the sexuality of man? Indeed, they are not.

The process of sexualization has been developing gradually. It is not ubiquitous, nor should it be comprehended as having a sexual character strictly. Sexualization includes not only sexual practices; it also covers spheres such as fashion, media, education, healthcare, and so on. It includes the contemporary stereotypes of men's and women's behavior; of how boys and girls should look; of what their way of speaking and communicating should be. Sexualization comprises social norms, cultural patterns, and psychological attitudes. It has also provoked a counter-reaction consisting in various attempts to maintain traditional morality and to reduce the influence of, roughly said, the pro-sexualization propaganda in the media and in the field of policy-making.

Freud was a witness of a rigorist morality that was similar to the Victorian type. He was convinced that the restrictions imposed by traditional morality would make any discussion on human sexuality impossible. Freud was not right: the opposite took place. The idea of "sexual freedom" appeared and it was embodied in various sub-cultures. The progress of medical technologies also allowed for extending this "freedom." With the invention of new ways of contraception, young people had many opportunities to satisfy their sexual desires without taking care of anything. The so-called "sexual revolution" was merely a manifestation of the desire of the young generation to abandon any responsibility in their life.

We analyzed the hedonistic attitude. It must be clear that sexualization is a form of hedonism, or at least it is tightly connected to hedonism. This is the reason for its discussion

here. As it will be shown, the popularity of abortion nowadays results namely from this hedonistic attitude.

There are many objective studies and research in this field. The report which will be referred to in the following pages has been prepared by the APA (American Psychological Association) Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls in 2007.⁵⁶ It describes very well the current situation in this country, and its conclusions can be easily applied to other Western societies. This report was chosen because there is a need to analyze the case with abortion and the influence exerted by the process of sexualization on the choice of women to conduct this terrible procedure. Abortion, by necessity, is performed with women involved. Hence it is essential to see in what way sexualization influences their convictions, behavior, attitudes, and so forth.

According to the report by the APA Task Force, sexualization takes place when one of the following is present:

1. A person is seen as valuable only because of his/her physical appearance or behavior.
2. Physical attractiveness is identified with being “sexy.”
3. A person is seen as a sexual object- i.e., not his/her personal traits, abilities, competences are taken into consideration. Wherein, a person is reduced to solely be a means of pleasure.

⁵⁶ American Psychological Association, “Report of the APA Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls”, APA, accessed August 1, 2018, <http://www.apa.org/pi/women/programs/girls/report.aspx>

4. A person is inappropriately seen in the context of sexuality (for example, a little girl with make-up)⁵⁷. It is enough for only one of these conditions to exist; then one could speak of sexualization.

It is not necessary for all of these characteristics to be present. Only one of them is enough to prove that there is sexualization. Still, one of them is more important than the others- this is the last one, which represents the most disastrous manifestation of sexualization. Furthermore, women are to be seen as involved in the process of sexualization more often than men: “In study after study, findings have indicated that women more often than men are portrayed sexually (e.g., dressed in revealing clothing, with bodily postures or facial expressions that imply sexual readiness) and are objectified.”⁵⁸ This very fact confirms the hypothesis that sexual stereotypes are applied more often to women. Taking aside the fact that the process of sexualization imposes such stereotypes, the latter are also reinforced by sexualization. This is an endless circle: to continue its existence, sexualization (as a social and cultural phenomenon) has to impose the given stereotypes; and the given stereotypes thus make this process more intensive. The stereotypes have existed independently from sexualization, but the latter process has employed them in most recent decades. In short: advertisements or movies with attractive women are seen more often; attractive women can have more opportunities for finding a good job; and so forth. This is an effect, but it is also the root of the process of sexualization. People are perceived, let’s repeat it, not as personalities but rather as sexual objects. There are other causes for the excessive sexualization of women; cultural, medical, educational.

⁵⁷ Ibid., par. 3.

⁵⁸ Ibid., par. 6.

The stereotypes related to sexualization reproduce themselves through imitation and social learning (when one learns by observing the behavior of others). As the report states, “a narrow (and unrealistic) standard of physical beauty is heavily emphasized. These are the models of femininity presented for young girls to study and emulate.”⁵⁹ Young women “learn” that they are valuable only when they have a certain physical appearance (which can be called “attractive”) and certain behavior (which can be referred to as “liberal”). As it is said in the report: “Frequent exposure to media images that sexualize girls and women affects how girls conceptualize femininity and sexuality.”⁶⁰ This is the crucial influence of the media (including internet media, TV and movies): “Girls and young women who more frequently consume or engage with mainstream media content offer stronger endorsement of sexual stereotypes that depict women as sexual objects. They also place appearance and physical attractiveness at the center of women’s value.”⁶¹ There is no need to read the report to establish this fact with certainty: it is enough to look the plethora of young girls who display that they are really influenced by the movies and shows they watch daily. Here it should be noted the notorious role played by Hollywood with its emphasis precisely on sexualization, and with its “definition” of beauty: only what is physically attractive is beautiful; therefore attractive actresses are beautiful. Young people who are not very experienced in life, or have a poor self-image, really believe in this definition and they forget that one’s physical appearance is not the only thing which makes us personalities.

⁵⁹ Ibid., par. 6.

⁶⁰ Ibid., par. 16

⁶¹ Ibid., par. 16.

Let's now turn to the opposite view. It can be maintained that such stereotypes are not harmful. What is so dangerous in teaching young women how to dress, how to take care of their physical appearance? The problem is rooted in the way in which the stereotypes dictate the behavior and the mentality of these young women. They are left without any chance to make decisions on their own. Still, they are average citizens with all ascribed rights and privileges, it can be objected. This is not exactly the case here. The society is based upon certain regulations. These have to be accepted by the members of a given society. Any violation of them will lead to negative sanctions (punishments). Adhering to them leads to social recognition. Now, the young woman that does not want to follow the certain stereotypes (about how a woman should look and behave) will be deprived of the needed social recognition. Her classmates, for instance, would laugh at her, or at best, they would avoid communicating with her altogether. If the young woman in question feels isolated and this has a negative influence on her self-confidence, she might go for a surgical operation to become "more attractive." There are other ways to do it as well- to change her behavior as to appear "more open," "more friendly to men," and so forth. The stereotypes imposed on women's behavior have far-reaching effects. One's behavior is affected; then one's values change gradually. The woman herself might begin believing that she has not been right in the past when she had believed that her physical appearance was not important. Instead of improving her moral conduct and placing emphasis on her education, this woman might rely on surgical operations or other types of cosmetic procedures to attract the attention of men! The consequences are easy to predict: pregnancy in her teenage years; then perhaps abortion (because it is "easy" to do it); disappointment related to all men (and the thought that "all men are the same"); distraction from the educational process (poor marks and/or lack of any ambition to continue her education). Alternatively, if all of these situations are

avoided, one negative thing will remain- the fear of aging. With aging men and women become less attractive, hence such a situation must be avoided at any cost. New surgical operations or procedures will follow in twenty or thirty years, and her “values” will be imposed on her children (especially those of the female sex). As it is remarked in the APA report: “Parents may contribute to sexualization in a number of ways. For example, parents may convey the message that maintaining an attractive physical appearance is the most important goal for girls. Some may allow or encourage plastic surgery to help girls meet that goal.”⁶² The education offered by this new generation of parents is too liberal, and it allows such stereotypes to become stronger, and to be imposed more easily on young women and even on children. Parents are often irresponsible- their job may cause this, but the way of living in our contemporary society also allows such irresponsibility to take place. Teachers are delegated with the task to take care of the education of our children- a fact which is an absurdity because the responsibility of every teacher is to teach! Schools cannot do our job for us. The consequences are terrible: children are allowed anything they want, and they are not taught what is good and what is bad. What is so strange then that children want to live like adults from their early childhood?

Sexualization of girls and young women affects their health and mental condition negatively. The report states: “Several studies... have found associations between exposure to narrow representations of female beauty... and disordered eating attitudes and symptoms. Research also links exposure to sexualized female ideals with lower self-esteem, negative mood and depressive symptoms.”⁶³ This fact has provoked plenty of initiatives, especially in the fashion industry, to change the traditional stereotype of the “beautiful model” and to employ as

⁶² Ibid., par. 9.

⁶³ Ibid., par. 14.

models women that are not usually perceived as “attractive.” Unfortunately, for now, such initiatives are only of a theoretical nature, and they do not have any legislative dimension. The harmful effects on women’s health are proved, and this requires urgent measures to change this state of affairs.

The authors of the APA report have some recommendations for policy-makers, educators, parents, and others involved in the process of reproducing these sexualized stereotypes. They claim that “the development and implementation of school-based media literacy training programs could be key in combating the influence of sexualization. There is an urgent need to teach critical skills in viewing and consuming media, focusing specifically on the sexualization of women and girls.”⁶⁴ Critical skills will help the girls and young women to tell the difference between their own choice and the choice imposed on them by external factors/persons. It is important for young people, in general, to know how to reflect on their own choices and values. It has been proved that young people construct their worldview during their teenage years, and the influence they are subjected to during this period is quite essential. Parents and teachers should work together, but the role of the media and policy-makers cannot be dismissed. By improving legislation, it is possible to reduce the impact of the process of sexualization and to protect girls and young women from it. For example, it can be forbidden for girls under the age of 12 to have make-up while in school; or there could be restrictions regarding selling certain cosmetic products to girls under a given age; beauty contests for children can also be banned; and so forth. Many measures can reduce this negative influence, but the first step is to realize that there is a serious problem with the young generations, and this problem is sexualization (with all of its manifestations). Sexualization includes behavior,

⁶⁴ Ibid., par. 20.

attitudes, personal beliefs and convictions, and interactions with others. This influence can point to sexuality, but sometimes it can also be connected with the desire of the child to “become an adult.” The fact that a twelve-year-old girl has make-up does not mean that she wants to be perceived as a sexual object; it means rather that she is taught (by her mother, for instance) that women with make-up are more valuable and interesting, so she does as she has been taught. The terrible thing here is that the girl herself does not realize the fact that this is not her own choice; that it is a stereotype imposed upon her. Furthermore, she will never be able to compensate for her lost childhood- because, when a child pretends to be an adult, the child is not able to make use of the wonderful opportunities offered by her childhood. Instead of playing with friends, the child will say: “This childish play is ridiculous, I want to be like an adult- to go to music concerts, to drink beer, to smoke cigarettes, to wear make-up.” The child remains a child, but its childhood is lost forever. This is one of the adverse side effects of the contemporary society.

The analysis of the impact of sexualization on girls and young women is good, the reader has the right to say, but in what way does it concern boys and young men? Are they affected by sexualization, and is this impact of a negative nature?

The first evident manifestation of sexualization among boys and young men is fornication. Boys at the beginning of their puberty start having sexual activities not because they want to; this is the influence of their environment, of the media, and maybe even of their parents (probably the father). The consequences are disastrous: they become fathers at the age of 14, or their child is aborted by their “girlfriend” at the same age; or they infect many girls with venereal diseases; and many others. The process of sexualization thus is not of any advantage to boys and young men; it is a serious obstacle in the process of their education, and someday it will prevent them from finding a good job or leading a meaningful life. Such persons are not able to find their

true love in life because they are taught that “love does not count,” and that “love is an illusion.” What kind of fathers would they be in the future? What kind of families could they establish?

Our children must learn that love is the center of every family; that love is the basis of any romantic relationship; that when one is deprived of love, no material thing in the world could replace it. However, how can they learn this? How many Hollywood movies preach this philosophy? What are the TV channels adhering to? Even the majority of our TV channels for kids sometimes broadcast programs which contain erotic elements (although not visible immediately)! What is the true love story aired by our TV channels? On the contrary, all they do is to tell us that love is transitory, that it is normal for families to dissolve, that same-sex marriages are the future of this country. What can be expected from this generation, then?

Now the number of abortions in this country could be better understood. Abortion is the perfect example of the process of sexualization taking place nowadays. Women are forced to think that abortion is their own choice. The latter is not theirs. Who has made them think like this? There are plenty of factors here- from their partners to the media, and their “medical advisors.” The entire anti-life movement objectifies women; it comprehends and posits them as sexual objects. The woman herself is not a personality; she is merely a body and a means of pleasure. Her body is her choice, the anti-lifers claim. What about her soul? What about her free will? Why do anti-lifers not allow women to make real, authentic choices? Where is the woman’s dignity? Who should stand in defense of the latter? These are quite interesting questions, which demonstrate that the popularity of abortion today is also a product of sexualization. Of course, the claim that abortion is always related to sexualization is not being made; in the distant past, there were abortions as well. Still, today mankind is witnessing the influence of a whole culture of abortion, or as it can be alternatively called, a culture of death.

Anthony Esolen even speaks of an “economics of abortion.” In his article under the same title, he observes the following: “What is abortion among us but an economic deal? We purchase our hedonism, and our economic latitude, with the blood of the children we do not want.”⁶⁵ This is the basis of contemporary consumerism: man buys whatever they want; man “buys” abortion because they want to have “a peaceful life.” Children are often seen as a burden, especially by teenage mothers and fathers; and this economics is very well developed: there is an efficient and large market dealing with abortions; media are arguing in favor of it; policy-makers are legalizing all possible forms and methods of it. This is a business centered on the hedonistic ideal: my pleasure is the only thing that counts; all responsibilities should be taken from me- now and forever. As Esolen puts it: “Men and women plan their lives with abortion in mind, that fail-safe against the consequences of their hedonism. Abortion is a sorcery, and the payoff is to be money in your wallet, a diploma on your wall, or a title before your name.”⁶⁶

Abortion is thus a product of the process above of sexualization in the following points:

1. It objectifies women, i.e., sees them as mere objects.
2. It takes the body and the personality of the woman as identical (“I am my own body”).
3. The idea that abortion is “good” is imposed on girls and young women from early childhood (by the media, Hollywood, educators, books, and so forth).

⁶⁵ Anthony Esolen, “The Economics of Abortion: Our Hedonism for the Price of the Blood of Our Children,” 10 November 2014, par. 7. Accessed August 1, 2018, <https://www.lifesitenews.com/blogs/the-economics-of-abortion-we-purchase-our-hedonism-with-the-blood-of-our-ch>

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, par. 7.

4. Young women without children perceive themselves as “more valuable,” for various reasons: they can find a good job more efficiently; they can have more educational opportunities; they can practice fornication without any obstacles; etc.

5. The easy access to abortion allows young couples to live their life without planning to establish a family together.

The fault is not only of the women wishing to carry out such a procedure. Their partners, parents, friends, and other persons can also affect their decision. The latter, let us repeat it, is rarely their own, individual choice. It is formulated under the pressure of external factors and the stereotypes to which the woman is subjected to (among them the one that a young woman does not need children).

The way to fight the anti-life movement (including its attitudes, convictions, etc.) is by education. The same, which was said about the sexualization of girls, must be applied to the problem of abortion. Parents and teachers must take their responsibility to educate girls and young women. Media, in general, have to be more careful while broadcasting programs related to abortion. And of course, legislators and policy-makers have to think more of the future of this country, a country which will never progress with an increased percentage of abortion, which leads to a decreased population.

We can be led on our way to overcome sexualization and the anti-life movement by two fascinating pieces of text, one of them elaborated by Pope Saint John Paul II, and the other by Cardinal Ratzinger and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. The fundamental truth which everyone must adhere to is that man is endowed with dignity, and abortion violates it. In *Mulieris Dignitatem* (On the Dignity and Vocation of Women, 1988), Pope John Paul II states as follows: “Motherhood implies from the beginning a special openness to the new person: and this

is precisely the woman's 'part.' In this openness, in conceiving and giving birth to a child, the woman 'discovers herself through a sincere gift of self.'"⁶⁷ Motherhood is the opportunity for a woman to realize herself. Motherhood allows her to become more tolerant, more communicative, more emphatic. The new person is the embryo: from the moment of conception, the mother becomes connected with the embryo, a new human personality. Abortion thus destroys this connection, and what is worse, destroys a new human life. Abortion deprives the given woman of motherhood, i.e., she will remain an unrealized mother, and also she will take part in the destruction of a new human being. All this is said from a moral point, without involving theology here. Still, if the claim is made that there is a God, and that God has sent the new life to earth, then things begin to look even worse: abortion violates the union between God and man. Although this union does not exist nowadays, it is the ideal state of affairs to which one must aspire. As Pope John Paul II remarked: "The dignity of every human being and the vocation corresponding to that dignity find their definitive measure in union with God."⁶⁸ The union with God has to be perceived as the starting point of any analysis of human nature. Not that the vocation of every woman is to become a mother; it is possible to imagine that a woman is not a mother and despite this she has realized her vocation. It is not necessary for the woman to be a mother in the literal sense; she can help and love others (like Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta, MC), and in such a way she will realize her vocation. Abortion in all cases opposes her nature and does not allow her to do what she was meant to do.

⁶⁷ John Paul II, "Mulieris Dignitatem," 15 August 1988, sect. 18. Accessed August 1, 2018, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/1988/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_19880815_mulieris-dignitatem.html

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, sect. 5.

We should not forget the fact that man was created as the image of God, so there is a specific relation between man and God. As Pope John Paul II observes: “Mary, the woman of the Bible, is the most complete expression of this dignity and vocation. For no human being, male or female, created in the image and likeness of God, can in any way attain fulfilment apart from this image and likeness.”⁶⁹ It is our duty and moral obligation to maintain this very likeness to God. If man was created by God, then humanity must protect every form of human life, and the case with abortions requires our strong efforts to protect life.

It can be objected that the latter assertion is theological, and non-believers are not obliged to adhere to it. However, the idea of the union of God and man could be interpreted also from a non-theological standpoint: there is something great, something incomprehensible in human nature, which makes man very different from all other living beings. This is the divine spark in him, or the spiritual substance. Women are endowed with something superlative to men, which cannot be had by them: motherhood. This is the great task of women, their greatest achievement (meaning, motherhood not only in the literal sense). Whether God has entrusted them with this task or not, the fact is that motherhood is what constitutes a woman. As it is said in *Mulieris Dignitatem*: “Motherhood involves a special communion with the mystery of life, as it develops in the woman’s womb. The mother is filled with wonder at this mystery of life, and ‘understands’ with unique intuition what is happening inside her.”⁷⁰ How can a woman subjected to abortion be a true mother? She has been delegated with the task to take care of a new life. This woman deprives herself of the opportunity to realize and fulfill her femininity. Today women subjected to abortion are seen as “independent,” as “emancipated.” The truth is

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, sect. 5.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, sect. 18.

the opposite: they destroy that which is most beautiful in women, they destroy women's dignity and beauty which consists in motherhood. As Pope John Paul II pointed out: "A woman represents a particular value by the fact that she is a human person, and, at the same time, this particular person, by the fact of her femininity."⁷¹ There cannot be any excuse for the woman, whatever her cultural and social background is: "This concerns each and every woman, independently of the cultural context in which she lives, and independently of her spiritual, psychological and physical characteristics."⁷²

Not only women are to be held responsible for abortions. It should be kept in mind that men must help women to realize their vocation, instead of pressing them to commit a crime that deprives these women of their femininity. It happens very often that men say: "I am not responsible for her decisions. It is not my business." It is men's business! It is the task of every father, brother, teacher, friend, and so forth, to help women discover their vocation, and prevent them from doing irreversible and nefarious things. Men are obliged to give a hand to every woman needing help. Abortions are not "women's things." Such an attitude is wrong and it leads to the increase of the number of abortions. It is men's responsibility to help the women fight the trend of abortions!

Knowing that abortion is against woman's vocation and dignity, enables one to turn to the relation between mother and child. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (with the main contribution by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger) formulated the Instruction on Respect for Human Life in Its Origin and on the Dignity of Procreation (1987).⁷³ Life is a gift from God, it is

⁷¹ Ibid., sect. 29.

⁷² Ibid., sect. 29.

⁷³ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Instruction on Respect for Human Life in Its Origin and on the

asserted throughout the Instruction. Abortion is a practice incompatible with morality (whether secular or religious morality). Life is priceless, and no one has the right to take it: “The gift of life which God the Creator and Father has entrusted to man calls him to appreciate the inestimable value of what he has been given and to take responsibility for it.”⁷⁴ Embryos are seen by the authors of this Instruction as living beings whose life cannot be taken: “The inviolability of the innocent human being’s right to life ‘from the moment of conception until death’ is a sign and requirement of the very inviolability of the person to whom the Creator has given the gift of life.”⁷⁵ Therefore, a human being appears not when he/she is born but rather when he/she is conceived. The moment of conception is the beginning of a new life, and of a new personality as well. This position of the Christian Church is well known. The embryo is understood as a person, hence abortion must be criminalized. Everyone has the right to live, therefore the embryo also possesses it: “The inviolable right to life of every innocent human individual and the rights of the family and of the institution of marriage constitute fundamental moral values, because they concern the natural condition and integral vocation of the human person.”⁷⁶ The same moral criteria must be applied to any medical practice in the field of procreation, and to all medical technologies in general. These technologies, as well as scientific research, must be based on the following principles: “respect, defence and promotion of man, his ‘primary and fundamental

Dignity of Procreation,” accessed August 1, 2018, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19870222_respect-for-human-life_en.html

⁷⁴ Ibid., sect. 1.

⁷⁵ Ibid., sect. 4.

⁷⁶ Ibid., sect. 5, III.

right' to life, his dignity as a person who is endowed with a spiritual soul and with moral responsibility and who is called to beatific communion with God."⁷⁷

Abortion is one of the best-known examples of sexualization. Abortion violates the human rights of both the mother and the newly conceived human being (embryo). Other practices such as in vitro fertilization, artificial insemination, surrogate "motherhood", and so forth, violate human dignity in the same manner. They need to be strictly reduced (and eventually banned) as to preserve the dignity of the human beings involved.

The reader might ask: Will a potential ban on abortion slow down the process of sexualization? Abortion is only a consequence; it is not the cause. There are many more consequences, visible and not conspicuous- from the practice of fornication to the way in which young people dress. We, as a society, need to understand that sexualization is not freedom; it is rather slavery. Man becomes a slave to his instincts. Ironically, sexualization has been supported (not explicitly) by materialism and scientism. The same materialism to which Dawkins and Lorenz belong, the same materialism which claims that man is endowed with freedom of will! There is a paradox here: What was meant to liberate man from his instincts, has actually brought him back to the latter in servitude and bondage. The role of hedonism is not to be underestimated: contemporary hedonism in combination with consumerism has led to the conviction that everything can be consumed, and that everything can be bought. Through abortion, some people (not only individuals but couples as well) "buy" peace of mind, a peace which is nothing but the murder of an innocent human being, a being which will never say "I love you" to its parents, which will never be able to enjoy being with them. All of this because

⁷⁷ Ibid, section 1.

abortion is understood as “good,” and marriage (including establishing a family) as “out-of-date.”

The evolutionist standpoint understands man as a product of a long-lasting natural process. Man emerged almost by chance, and someday he will cease to exist, roughly said. The hedonist point of view is not interested in such ontological issues. It looks to human morality and tries to answer the question: How should a human being live? According to what moral ideals should be established and lived? The pleasure principle is fundamental for the proponents of hedonism. They understand man as a living being solely aspiring toward pleasure. Whatever one does, it is related to this principle somehow.

Christianity repudiates hedonism. It offers the following counter-arguments which deny the hedonistic standpoint:

1. Pleasure is only transitory.
2. Pleasure loses its meaning when it is experienced too often (continuously).
3. Man’s nature is not based upon the pleasure principle. This is proved by the fact that all mankind has much different aspirations.
4. Human sexuality is related to reproduction. It does not exist only for pleasure.
5. Pleasure is evidently far from being able to posit the meaning of human life.

We do not live only for gaining pleasure, this is certain. Otherwise, everyone experiencing pleasure would have been happy throughout all his life. Happiness and pleasure should also be discerned carefully: the pleasant things do not always make us happy. What gives us pleasure is to realize our vocation. Now, what is man’s mission? For sure, it goes beyond our

mere physiological needs and processes. Man is endowed with intellect. Can it be said that man's intellect is connected with his vocation? Let us see the answer in the following chapter.

Man from the Rationalistic Point of View

Christian believers know quite well that evolutionism and hedonism are philosophies and modes of life that oppose Christian values and a Christ-centered worldview. The evolutionist standpoint repudiates Christian creationism, or the doctrine that man was created by God. Hedonism, on the other hand, takes a position contrary to Christian morality, the latter being founded upon altruism, self-sacrificial and chaste love, and compassion. Nevertheless, there is another menace to the Christian worldview: rationalism. Rationalism here does not mean the philosophical school according to which the source of our knowledge is found in the mind (contrary to empiricism). The present report does not aim at elucidating any theory of truth, hence the debate rationalism-empiricism will be left aside and not debated or resolved. The intellect should be our sole authority, the proponents of this philosophy claim. If a given statement is not logical, if it contradicts the concepts employed by our intellect, it must be rejected. This is the core of the rationalistic attitude. Besides, there is another point to be highlighted and commented on: this attitude is tightly connected with the assumption that science must be trusted completely, without any hesitation, and that everything that scientists say have to be taken as infallible and true. This second point can be named scientism. Rationalism and scientism thus walk are interchangeable.

In what way is rationalism affiliated with materialism? There is no direct connection between them. A philosopher can be both a rationalist and an idealist. But contemporary materialists employ this attitude to impose their view: (1) only what science asserts is true; (2) there is no room for faith; and (3) morality is dispensable. Dawkins evidently adheres to scientism; and Haeckel is a vehement proponent of rationalism (in this new sense offered here) and scientism. Therefore, this attitude which leads to a faulty conception about the nature of man needs to be discussed.

The Rationalistic Attitude

Summary:

The excessive emphasis on rationalism is referred to here as the rationalistic attitude. It claims that man can cognize the whole world by using our intellect. The rest of our abilities and capacities are not needed, or should be dominated by the intellect. This subchapter deals with this dangerous attitude whose founder is Rene Descartes, and tries to repudiate it. William James will be referred to as one of its main opponents.

It is disputable as to when rationalism emerged; if one speaks of it as an attitude. The prevailing opinion is that rationalism is a product of modernity, i.e., it appeared at the end of the Renaissance. Yet, some rationalistic ideas can be traced back to ancient Greece, and they are visible also in other civilizations- among them some schools of philosophy in ancient India and China. Here it will be assumed that Rene Descartes is the “father” of the rationalistic attitude.

Descartes was among the first philosophers to claim that man can gradually build a whole picture of the world, a picture which will be final and perfect, by employing our intellect. The problem as to what is the source of true knowledge according to Descartes is inconsequential.

Nor is his conception of God and the assumption that God has endowed man with the capability to know the world and to gain true knowledge of any interest. Descartes believed that a final, absolute picture of the world is achievable by the human intellect. He dismissed the assumption that faith can also have some role in the process of cognition. Knowledge is thus seen as achievable only by intellectual means.

What were the motives which drove Descartes toward constructing a new philosophical system? Officially, scholars maintain that Descartes wanted to overcome the difficulties in the metaphysics of the 17th century (which was too abstract and needed to employ new terminology). Steven Toulmin, on the other hand, claims that Descartes' rationalism is the product of a serious historical crisis, i.e., The Thirty Years' War (1618-1648). This was (formally) a religious war between Catholics and Protestants, and what Descartes sought was to overcome the conflict by demonstrating that the truth stands above religion. As Toulmin asserts in his book *Cosmopolis*: "The 17th-century triumph of rationalism, and the Quest for certainty to which it gave rise, did not happen out of a clear blue sky, but were intelligible response to a specific historical crisis."⁷⁸ This was a time when Catholic and Protestant theologians tried to prove the veracity of their conceptions, and to demonstrate the falsity of their opponents' theories. Descartes was himself trained in Catholicism, as it can be seen throughout his works. Still, the French philosopher was convinced that science is the proper way to God, and by knowing the world one will be able to attain to God. Descartes formulated the philosophy of deism (but not explicitly, because this was unacceptable at that time), i.e. God created the world and the laws governing it, and then He withdrew from the world. Hence, the world currently is in the state of self-governance, and God

⁷⁸ Stephen Toulmin, *Cosmopolis. The Hidden Agenda of Modernity* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1990), 80.

is only an observer. Science is the way to comprehend God; and science needs to have certain foundations. Humanity cannot lay doubtful assertions as a cornerstone of modern science, Descartes asserted. One must find which assertions are absolutely true, and then start building our “construction” comprising the whole knowledge of the world. Before Toulmin, this intention was held to be purely epistemological, i.e., Descartes himself searched for the truth because science at his time had many drawbacks. Toulmin challenged this understanding with the view that Descartes was eager to put an end to war by separating the field of religion from the field of science. As Toulmin claims, the rationalists in the 17th century were in a search for a project which would propose one, objective truth whose certainty would be accepted by everyone, without regard of one’s religious denomination.⁷⁹

Before Descartes, epistemology was not seen as very important. Philosophers dealt with moral issues, for example, Michel de Montaigne and Blaise Pascal. As Toulmin remarks, at the beginning of the 17th century no one believed that there was something absolute, except God. Knowledge could not be absolutely certain because our abilities are strictly limited. This was the basis of Montaigne’s skepticism. With Descartes, a turn in philosophy began: the Quest for certainty, as Toulmin says, now looked meaningful and realistic. As Toulmin remarks: “The Cartesian program for philosophy swept aside the ‘reasonable’ uncertainties and hesitations of 16th-century skeptics, in favor of new, mathematical kinds of ‘rational’ certainty and proof.”⁸⁰ Science was seen not as an additional entertainment of philosophers, which had to be subordinated to metaphysics; the latter had to be transformed into a more “science-friendly” system of knowledge. Thus, metaphysics was destined to be dismissed by philosophers from

⁷⁹ Ibid., 82-83.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 75.

Descartes onwards, except of the great German idealists (whose work was rather an opposition of this tendency in philosophy). Science had to replace metaphysics! The era of the Renaissance was over, and modernity began. As Toulmin describes it: “The rationalists’ ambition to build a ‘foundation’ for knowledge was, thus, not aimed at epistemology alone. They looked not just for a way to give knowledge the certainty that Montaigne and his fellow skeptics denied it: they also wanted to build up a fresh cosmology from scratch.”⁸¹ Metaphysics had to be “cleansed” from doubtful assumptions, and these had to be replaced with “proven” ones, i.e., metaphysics had to be subordinated to science. This idea would be realized later by David Hume (who attacked metaphysics from the standpoint of empiricism) and Auguste Comte (who criticized metaphysics from the point of view of positivism).

There are three main works by Descartes which are recommended for reading to everyone interested in philosophy in general: *A Discourse on the Method*, *Meditations on the First Philosophy*, and *Principles of Philosophy*.⁸² The first work is an introduction of Descartes method- universal doubt. The *Meditations* are his most important work where Descartes formulates and describes the whole procedure: from universal doubt, through the idea that God has endowed us with the capacity to know the world, to the thesis that the basis of our knowledge has to be all clear and distinct concepts, one of them being the fact of God’s reality and another one the fact that thought is our essence.

Descartes’ rationalism consists in his conviction that there is one truth, and that everyone is equally capable of grasping it by employing his intellectual powers. As Descartes puts it: “The

⁸¹ Ibid., 83.

⁸² Rene Descartes, “Discourse on the Method”, in *A Discourse on Method* (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1912).

conviction is rather to be held as testifying that the power of judging: aright and of distinguishing truth from error, which is properly what is called good sense or reason, is by nature equal in all men.”⁸³ Mistakes are rooted in the fact that men do not follow the proper procedure: “The diversity of our opinions, consequently, does not arise from some being endowed with a larger share of reason than others, but solely from this, that we conduct our thoughts along different ways, and do not fix our attention on the same objects.”⁸⁴ Descartes believes, therefore, that if everyone follows the procedure proposed by him, everyone will “construct” the same “building of knowledge.” The arrival point will be identical for everyone- this is what Descartes is eager to demonstrate. Another point, which is of significant importance for Descartes’ rationalism, is the belief that there is nothing incognizable in the world (except God Who is of another order of existence): “All things... are mutually connected in the same way... There is nothing so far removed from us as to be beyond our reach, or so hidden that we cannot discover it, provided only we abstain from accepting the false for the true.”⁸⁵

There is nothing wrong in Descartes’ assertion quoted above, the Christian believer can object. He does not say anything against the Christian worldview. This is true; Descartes himself was not anti-Christian, for, he was trained and reared in Catholicism, and was very familiar with Christian theology. The consequences of his theory, though, are disastrous: man will reach the truth only by employing our intellect; even the reality of God is graspable by the latter. God’s reality is one of the clear and distinct concepts Descartes speaks about. What is the place of faith in Descartes’ theory? The following quotations will suffice to demonstrate that faith is not

⁸³ Ibid., 1.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 16.

needed for him: “Whatever mode of probation I in the end adopt, it always returns to this, that it is only the things clearly and distinctly conceive which have the power of completely persuading me.”⁸⁶ Faith, at any rate, does not always deal with such concepts. Sometimes faith offers us to believe in a hypothesis that may be true, but it is still not absolutely true. God’s reality is rather a matter of faith, because our intellect is not able to grasp it completely. The intellect can only be of some assistance to our faith in such cases.

The reality of God, Descartes claims, is perceived at once because this is a clear and distinct idea, perhaps the clearest of all possible ideas. This is our starting point. Then man arrives at the assumption that he exists, since he thinks; and thought is connected with some existence. Therefore, the thinking being exists with certainty. By following this chain of inferences, one will arrive at more clear concepts which man has in his mind. All of them are equally true, as Descartes explains: “And although, of the objects I conceive in this manner, some, indeed, are obvious to every one, while others are only discovered after close and careful investigation; nevertheless, after they are once discovered, the latter are not esteemed less certain than the former.”⁸⁷ This means that not only the idea of God’s reality is absolutely certain; there are other ideas as well, and the latter should not be ignored by the person searching for truth.

Actually, the philosopher asks: What does provide us with the certainty that knowledge is not an illusion? There is one warrant: God. It is evident that God exists, and God is perfect; therefore, he does not want to deceive us. It must be taken for granted that our clear and distinct ideas are true, and their source is not an evil deceiver: “Every clear and distinct conception is

⁸⁶ Rene Descartes, “Meditations on the First Philosophy,” in *A Discourse on Method* (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1912), 124.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

doubtless something, and as such cannot owe its origin to nothing, but must of necessity have God for its author- God, I say, who, as supremely perfect, cannot, without a contradiction, be the cause of any error.”⁸⁸ God has given man the opportunity to know the world around him, and he is obliged to use his abilities.

The reader of Descartes may think that God is an absolutely necessary part of Descartes’ theory. This is a disputable moment. Actually, the concept of God is used by Descartes only to prove the thesis that knowledge is objective, and it is not a mere deception (as Berkley would say later). God does not have any other function in Descartes’ epistemology. His reality is simply the point of departure of Descartes: “I very clearly see that the certitude and truth of all science depends on the knowledge alone of the true God, insomuch that, before I knew him, I could have no perfect knowledge of any other thing.”⁸⁹ Not that man should first know God, and then the world; the French thinker means that man is endowed with an inner, innate idea of God’s reality but a person cannot know Him, and science does not deal with God at all. Therefore, our cognitive efforts have to be directed to knowing the world. The world is cognizable by using our intellect; faith, emotions, do not operate here. Emotions are what leads us to error. The French philosopher asserts the following: “If we desire to inquire into the origin and cause of our errors, with a view to guard against them, it is necessary to observe that they depend less on our understanding than on our will.”⁹⁰ What he probably means is the fact that man is sometimes led by his needs and desires, by our fantasies, instead of by our common sense and logic. It happens

⁸⁸ Ibid., 119.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 126.

⁹⁰ Rene Descartes, “The Principles of Philosophy”, in *A Discourse on Method* (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1912), 177.

that man does not want to believe in a given fact only because it contradicts our convictions. This is the strongest source of our errors, Descartes points out. Hence, man has to rely less on his own will (i.e. desires). Our intellect should be the only instrument leading us to the truth.

Still, Descartes' concept of mind is not completely clear. By referring to the intellect, he means also the human mind, reason, logic, and common sense. They are to be taken as synonyms. Thought is man's essence, Descartes asserts: "I rightly conclude that my essence consists only in my being a thinking thing (or a substance whose whole essence or nature is merely thinking)."⁹¹ This is what makes man different from anything else. Man's personality is identical with his thought. However, the French philosopher does not stop here, with the assertion that man's essence is found in thought. The mind, according to him, is to be understood broadly: it comprises our emotions, sensations, and so forth. The following assertion can be seen as very confusing: "By the word thought, I understand all that which so takes place in us that we of ourselves are immediately conscious of it; and, accordingly, not only to understand, to will, to imagine, but even to perceive, are here the same as to think."⁹² In short, everything which happens "within" us is thought.

Is this confusing enough? Certainly, it is. Descartes wants to assert that the mind and the soul are the same, with all possible consequences of such a definition. The rational and the emotional parts of the soul have always been separated (or analyzed separately) by philosophers. What Descartes does is uniting them into one whole where the rational element dominates. Hence, the reader should be careful when meeting the terms "mind" or "thought" in Descartes: they signify the soul. Still, the soul is mainly rational, mainly cognitive.

⁹¹ Descartes, *Meditations*, 132.

⁹² Descartes, *Principles*, 167.

It is not certain whether Descartes denies the existence of any non-rational type of knowledge. No credence can be afforded to whether or not he rejects the possibility of our faith being able to lead us to the truth. Descartes is quite careful with such issues. Without a doubt, however, he founds metaphysics on scientific grounds, and even narrows down the scope of metaphysics by claiming that God is not cognizable: “In passing from the knowledge of God to the knowledge of the creatures, it is necessary to remember that our understanding is finite, and the power of God infinite.”⁹³ Not that Descartes repudiates theology; but it seems that for him the task of theology cannot be accomplished by rationalistic means. Theology should employ faith, and faith is not what Descartes is interested in (unlike Blaise Pascal).

It is evident that Descartes is a dualist regarding human nature. He claims that our body and soul are completely separated, that they are two different substances. Is this dualism connected somehow to his rationalistic attitude? There is some connection. Descartes wants to separate both spheres: of truth (knowledge) and religion (faith). The task of theology is thus to deal with faith, but also with the human soul; and science cannot deal with the human soul. The soul is not susceptible to any scientific analysis, Descartes believes, therefore it must be excluded from the field of science. This separation is not motivated by Descartes’ Christian faith. It is rather an attempt to justify the complete independence of the scientific sphere. Science is the only proper activity which has the right to deal with the truth, Descartes is convinced (although he does not formulate it in that way).

There is nothing wrong to assert that science should deal with the truth; but the truth is not achievable only through science. Revelation can also lead us to the truth. The rationalistic attitude does not allow for such a possibility: faith must deal only with the reality of God, and

⁹³ Ibid., 174.

nothing more. The creation of the world and many more biblical accounts related to the history of mankind have to be analyzed only by science. In such a way, rationalism becomes a threat to the Christian faith in general.

Descartes was followed by another French philosopher, Julien La Mettrie (18th century). However, La Mettrie rejected the fundamental assumption of Descartes: that God's reality allows us to know the world. There is no God, and the immortality of the soul is a fiction, La Mettrie claimed. In his essay *Man a Machine* he elaborated his own mechanistic philosophy. La Mettrie brings there Descartes' rationalism to another level- only what corresponds to the materialistic worldview can be held to be real. Whereas Descartes takes the thesis that God is real as his point of departure, La Mettrie repudiates any possibility of God's reality and proposes a view which is in proximity to physiological reductionism- the soul is simply a set of functions dependent on one's physiology. As the philosopher claims: "It is the source of all our feelings, of all our pleasures, of all our passions, and of all our thoughts: for the brain has its muscles for thinking, as the legs have muscles for walking."⁹⁴ The soul is the function of the brain, the French materialist asserts: "This principle exists and has its seat in the brain at the origin of the nerves, by which it exercises its control over all the rest of the body."⁹⁵

There is nothing which makes La Mettrie's philosophy much different from Haeckel's or Dawkins' one, the reader could maintain. Richard Dawkins also claims that man is a machine, but a "surviving machine."⁹⁶ This observation is correct: La Mettrie is among the predecessors of Haeckel. Nevertheless, La Mettrie's materialism will be highlighted in order to show how

⁹⁴ Julien La Mettrie, *Man a Machine* (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing, 1912), 132.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 132.

⁹⁶ Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene* (Oxford University Press, 2006), 21.

Descartes' rationalistic attitude turned into materialism. Haeckel's and Dawkins' materialism are only the results of such an understanding; but thinkers such as La Mettrie, Holbach, and others contributed a lot in this process of transformation. Descartes himself would have been shocked to see how his dualism was transformed into brutal materialism. Descartes claims that man possesses a double nature due to his dualistic essence (body and soul). La Mettrie, on the contrary, points out the following: "Is more needed... to prove that man is but an animal, or a collection of springs which wind each other up, without our being able to tell at what point in this human circle, nature has begun?"⁹⁷ It is useful to know that the philosophy of the French materialists (18th century) was the true predecessor of Darwin's evolutionism, for La Mettrie, Holbach, and the others emphasized the assumption that man is entirely a natural being which cannot be seen as existing outside of nature. By taking this starting point, it is logical to proceed with the idea that nature created man, and that there is not another explanation of man's existence in the world. Furthermore, La Mettrie claims that nature is omnipotent and no one should not be surprised to know this: "She creates millions of men, with a facility and a pleasure more intense than the effort of a watchmaker in making the most complicated watch."⁹⁸ La Mettrie thus repudiates Christian creationism; every being was created by nature.

It can be asked, then: When was man created, and what was he at the beginning? The answer of the French materialist is not entirely different from the one of any evolutionist: "The transition from animals to man is not violent, as true philosophers will admit. What was man before the invention of words and the knowledge of language? An animal of his own species

⁹⁷ La Mettrie, *Machine*, 135.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 145.

with much less instinct than the others.”⁹⁹ Man was a being similar to all other animals, the materialist states. La Mettrie does not have any evidences to prove his point; the only thing he relies on here is his own conviction that God does not exist, therefore nature created man. With the course of time, man gained new abilities and capacities which were absent in other animals (La Mettrie means mammals). The abilities to write, to draw, to speak- they all appeared gradually, and not all of a sudden: “Man has been trained in the same way as animals. He has become an author, as they became beasts of burden.”¹⁰⁰ La Mettrie was partially an evolutionist before Darwin, as it seems from this quotation.

Now, it is reasonable to ask the question: Who has trained man to be a writer, an artist, etc.? Animals are trained by humans. Who trained humans, then? This comparison is not correct. How did our abilities appear? When did languages emerge? In what way? Why isn't there a further evolution of languages? Why are languages today as complex as in the distant past (for example, in ancient Egypt, around four-thousand years ago)? Are our literary skills becoming better and better? The truth is that this is not correct. A serious change in man's skills and abilities is not documented or apparent. Contemporary philosophers are not smarter than Plato or than any wise man in ancient Egypt or China. It has not been proved yet how language appeared and when. There are only hypotheses by some evolutionists. But the modern tendency in cognitive psychology takes the side of the assumption that the human mind has always “produced” language; because thought is the normal state of operation of the mind, and language is the expression of thought. How could La Mettrie explain this fact?

⁹⁹ Ibid., 103.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 103.

In one respect, the French materialist is right. He assumes that man, even a machine, is of a very complicated nature: “Man is so complicated a machine that it is impossible to get a clear idea of the machine beforehand, and hence impossible to define it.”¹⁰¹ He still admits that man’s essence cannot be grasped even with scientific means. There is something more than man’s body, there is something beyond man’s physiology. In addition, it is clear that the mind is not merely a function of the brain. La Mettrie’s essay concludes with the assertion that nature is wonderful and only nature knows how it has created man. This is not a logical explanation!

Many more examples of the materialistic attitude can be found. According to our thesis, materialism in the form it is known nowadays (as in Richard Dawkins’ works) is the logical outcome of the rationalistic attitude. The following points can be attributed to the rationalistic attitude (or view):

1. The world is entirely cognizable.
2. The only way to know the world is by employing human intellect/mind/reason.
3. This task must be accomplished by science, and not by any other field of human activity (art, religion, or another).
4. God should be left to theology. The task of theology is to define Him by referring to Revelation. This is not and cannot be true knowledge. It remains in the field of belief.
5. It would be better for religion to admit its errors and retreat from some territories that it has taken perennially as its own (for example, to retreat from creationism).

The rationalistic attitude has provoked dissatisfaction and criticism. Irrationalism of the 19th century whose primary target was Hegel’s absolute idealism will not be referenced. There is

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 89.

one very interesting American philosopher who elaborated a theory of ontological pluralism. William James employed an empiricist approach while dealing with the fundamental philosophical concepts. He used pragmatism as a tool which can help any philosopher to define correctly the meaning of a given concept. For instance, when one defines the soul, they need to show how it operates in practice. The soul is thus not a thing-in-itself but has certain manifestations which one must examine. Now, William James opposed the type of Hegelian absolutism which at that time (the beginning of the 20th century) dominated the British academic environment. British Hegelianism was one of the philosophical descendants of rationalism. Its disastrous mistake was the assumption that the world can be cognize only by using our intellect. This is what James attacked: man is endowed not only with intellect, but with will and emotions as well. What about faith? James thus criticized rationalism by maintaining that our volition and emotional nature must also be taken into consideration.

As James observes: “Rationality has at least four dimensions, intellectual, aesthetical, moral, and practical; and to find a world rational to the maximal degree in all these respects simultaneously is no easy matter.”¹⁰² He goes on further: “Intellectually, the world of mechanical materialism is the most rational, for we subject its events to mathematical calculation. But the mechanical world is ugly, as arithmetic is ugly, and it is nonmoral. Morally, the theistic world is rational enough, but full of intellectual frustrations”¹⁰³ What is rationality, then? the American philosopher asks. There are many conceptions of rationality, as it can be seen even by the non-professional philosopher: some of them put more emphasis on science; other- on art; third- on morality; and so forth. Mechanistic philosophy can be perceived as completely rational; still, it

¹⁰² William James, *A Pluralistic Universe* (New York, London, Bombay, Calcutta: Longmans, Green, and Co, 1909), 112.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 112.

omits spheres like morality and art. The world seen as a giant mechanism is ugly; there is no soul in it, nothing animates it. The real problem, James says, comes with the process of abstraction: when our intellect tries to generalize everything existing, then man is only left with dry concepts which are understood as isolated from experience. And experience is life, James claims: concepts correspond to the experience and not vice versa. Some rationalists (such as these Hegelians) prioritize logic and maintain that the reality should correspond to it: “Logic being the lesser thing, the static incomplete abstraction, must succumb to reality, not reality to logic. Our intelligence cannot wall itself up alive, like a pupa in its chrysalis. It must at any cost keep on speaking terms with the universe that engendered it.”¹⁰⁴ What the American thinker has in mind is the attempt to formulate an encompassing system of philosophy which would explain every existing phenomenon coherently. But can experience be conceptualized as a whole? If man can do it, will it remain experience? According to James, sometimes our intellect is not able to understand what man is experiencing. Man tries to conceptualize the things that are unknown to them. The same principle is applied to any event and phenomenon that requires our intellectual effort. As James remarks: “What we do in fact is to harness up reality in our conceptual systems to drive it the better. This process is practical because all the termini to which we drive are particular termini.”¹⁰⁵ And the philosophy of rationalism emphasizes the fact that everything can and should be known by our intellect. And what if a given event remains unknown? Rationalism requires from us to reject any “mystical” explanation; only what is “rational” is counted as cogent and feasible. But what is rational? Where does rationality stop, and where does

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 207.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 248.

irrationality begin? As James asks: “The universe must be rational; well and good; but how rational? in what sense of that eulogistic but ambiguous word?”¹⁰⁶

Rationalism has multiple degrees. There is no one type of rationalism. In Descartes’ works rationalism functions as the central method for constructing a worldview; in James, rationalism takes the form of pragmatism, or the principle that concepts can be defined only by considering their practical effects and dimensions. The rationalism of the most significant contemporary philosopher- J. Habermas- is completely different. It puts stress on the rational discourse and rational communication, i.e., on the dialogue realized in a community. Rational is what the community agrees is rational! James is right then to claim that this word is ambiguous.

James is the philosopher who pays attention to the difference between worldview and knowledge. Yes, it is true that science deals with knowledge; that it has supreme authority as regards to our knowledge of the world. Still, every worldview has its value. The fact that my worldview is not entirely “scientific” does not mean it is deprived of any value! The claim that science is itself the only authority in the cognitive sphere is wrong, the American philosopher asserts. Why should only scientists have the right to attribute veracity to a given assumption? What if they are not capable of proving that it is absolutely true? Why should our faith be left aside and ignored? If the theory of evolution is not provable in the absolute sense (for, it deals with phenomena which occurred in the distant past, and no one witnessed it), why should one be obliged to believe in it? There must be some limit to rationality simply because the world is not entirely explicable. Man needs to understand the world, to find the meaning of life, instead of conceptualizing our experience. William James observes the following: “Philosophy should seek this kind of living understanding of the movement of reality, not follow science in vainly

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 74.

patching together fragments of its dead results.”¹⁰⁷ This is what the rationalistic attitude is missing: it does not comprehend reality in its totality, it only deals with “dry” facts and assertions. Any scientific criteria or activity do not cover the most vital issues of man’s existence.

If science cannot answer these vital questions, is religion able to do accomplish this noble task? Is a dialogue between science and religion possible? Could religion turn into a cognitive sphere? Can religion become rational?

The Rationalized Religion

Summary:

An application of the rationalist attitude will be discussed here. This is the conception that religion should be rationalized. An example of this is Auguste Comte’s theory of a religion of Humanity which is deprived of both God and the belief in the immortality of the soul. It will be demonstrated that this is not a true religion, and that if Christianity were deprived of the element of faith, it would cease to exist imminently.

There is an assumption that even if a person does not need faith, one can still use it somehow. Why not rationalize it, then? The rationalistic attitude is ready to rationalize every sphere of human activity. There have been some attempts to apply this principle to religion. The reader has probably heard about “rational religion,” “rational Christianity,” “scientific Christianity,” and many more of the kind. One of the most famous examples is the so-called religion of Humanity formulated by the French philosopher Auguste Comte. Comte lived in the

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 264.

first half of the 19th century, shortly after the French Revolution (1789). That was a period of social, economic, and political changes which sometimes took place without any warning. Comte himself was an utopist eager to construct the theoretical foundation of a wealthy, happy society of the future. He argued in favor of the philosophy of positivism (formulated by another philosopher- Saint-Simon- earlier) which put stress mainly on empirical research, on experience, and the role of science for constructing “a happy society.”

According to Comte, natural sciences must adopt the empirical method which requires every theory to be supported evidentially, not by futile and unsubstantiated hypotheses. On the other hand, Comte asserts that science itself is wrong if based only on experience and experimentation. Science must take into consideration the problems of mankind. Among these problems are poverty, inequality, aggression, and others. They can be solved through applying the positivist method to man’s history. Comte believes that our common history has been regulated by certain laws similar to the laws of nature. The task of the positive science is to examine these laws, and then to offer solutions for the actual problems. Therefore, positive science stands above the natural sciences, for the latter cannot solve any vital problem of mankind.

Now, the society of the future, according to Comte, will be founded upon the principle of the common good, that is, if the society as a whole is happy, then every individual will be happy as well. This must be the ideal to which every positive scientist has to aspire. Art, science (governed by the ideals of positivism), and morality have to share the same ideals. Comte thus arrived at the idea that religion should also be involved, for it has been significant for mankind since the era of the primitive men. Religion in the form of monotheism, he assumed, is part of

our past; but it can still remain in the form of a positive religion, i.e., religion of Humanity. What does this mean?

Comte's theory of the positive religion is outlined in his *System of Positive Polity* (1851). He describes there his theory of the ideal state (analogously to Plato's Republic). The positive philosophy encompasses all of the main fields of human activity: art, morality, science, religion, politics, and economy. The religion of Humanity is among the prerequisites of the future transformation of the society. Although Comte calls it "religion," it actually does not have anything to do with religion. It is rather a philosophical doctrine with its temples, priests, and rituals. Here is given this "religion" as an example of the rationalization of religion that resulted from the rationalist attitude- an attitude that can reasonably be attributed to Auguste Comte.

The religion of the future will integrate our heart, intellect, and moral action, Comte assumes: "Thus it is that in the Positive system, the Heart, the Intellect, and the Character mutually strengthen and develop one another; because each is systematically directed to the mode of action for which it is by nature adapted."¹⁰⁸ But such integration should have one center. Comte's answer is: in the concept of Mankind, of Humanity in general. This is the only concept which embraces all human beings, and excludes all other living beings and existing things. The concept of God is not needed anymore, Comte asserts: "By it the conception of God will be entirely superseded; and a synthesis be formed, more complete and permanent than that provisionally established by the old religions."¹⁰⁹ Thus Comte optimistically describes his utopian theory.

¹⁰⁸ Auguste Comte, *System of Positive Polity* (London: Longman, Greens, and Co, 1875), 259.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 263.

Is the conception of Comte similar to the doctrine of Communism? Some parallels can be easily found in this respect. It should be noted that the early Karl Marx's works on Communism had been already published at that time. It is highly possible that Comte tried to offer an alternative to Communism, which at that time seemed dangerous to both German and French societies. Marxism also takes the concept of mankind as central, but it adds that mankind is not the absolute; the historical development of the society is dependent on external factors (mainly economical). Marxism never attempted at formulating a "religion." Comte did it, for he believed that religion is still needed, even in an atheistic society (the society of the future). Hence, one could find some similarities between both doctrines, but positivism still offers the conception of a gradual transformation of the society, and it rejects the notion of class struggle (which is typical of Marxism). Transformation should be peaceful, Comte was convinced, in contrast with Marx.

Humanity will be the absolute upon which all our thoughts, feelings and actions should be focused. It is the new Great Being which replaces the Christian God: "Towards Humanity, who is for us the only true Great Being, we, the conscious elements of whom she is composed, shall henceforth direct every aspect of our life... Our thoughts will be devoted to the knowledge of Humanity, our affections to her love, our actions to her service."¹¹⁰ In short, mankind (humanity) is conceived as the only reality, and all individuals are seen as its servants. The individual is not real in himself; it only becomes real as a part of the whole, of Humanity. Humanity is an abstraction, and at the same time, it is the only reality. As the French positivist puts it: "Each one of us will recognise in it a power superior to his own, a power on which the whole destiny of his life depends, since the life of the individual is in every respect subordinate

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 264.

to the evolution of the race.”¹¹¹ In brief, mankind has to submit themselves to the well-being of Humanity in general.

Speaking about Humanity, what does Comte have in mind? His assumption reads as follows: Humanity is more than the sum of all individual human beings. Humanity is one integrated whole, with its history, present, and future. It is governed by the same laws, by the same regulations. All individuals are human beings because they belong to Humanity. Therefore, our mission in life is to serve Humanity, and in such a manner mankind will ensure a happy life for the future generations. Man must deny self-love (egoism), and replace it with an altruistic love for Humanity.

Without any doubt, Comte understands Humanity as an organism of a higher type. Other philosophers have expressed similar ideas- for instance, Oswald Spengler. However, the latter’s theory does not exactly concern Mankind/Humanity as a whole, but rather a specific part of it called culture. Thus Comte’s view can be defined as collectivism which is opposed to individualism. Humanity as a whole does not merely require us to serve in its favor; it can provide us with peace of mind as well. Man’s life is interwoven with the lives of others, Comte claims: “To live in others is, in the truest sense of the word, life. Indeed the best part of our own life is passed thus.”¹¹² There is some room for altruism in this doctrine, then. Man must help others, but only as to achieve the common good (not merely to help them satisfy their egoistic needs and desires). There is a common awareness of a common mission and a common destiny. Comte names it social feeling and states that positivism “sets forth social feeling as the first

¹¹¹ Ibid., 273.

¹¹² Ibid., 278.

principle of morality; without ignoring the natural superiority in strength of the personal instincts. To live for others it holds to be the highest happiness.”¹¹³

However, the religion of the future employs our intellectual powers as well. The intellect has its peculiar place in the system elaborated by Comte: “Yet the belief in Humanity while stimulating Sympathy, at the same time enlarges the scope and vigour of the Intellect... Reason, then, has its part in this central dogma as well as Love. It enlarges and completes our conception of the Supreme Being.”¹¹⁴ Man needs to know the Supreme Being, i.e., Humanity. This knowledge includes the history of Humanity, the stages in its progress, the laws governing the latter, and so forth. This “religion” stands in close proximity to science than to true religion.

Is this conception rationalistic? It is rationalistic, but only to some degree. Even though Comte envisages the social transformation as conducted by science (but positive science!), his theory still leaves some room for human emotions and feelings, morality, and faith. Surprisingly, Comte claims that science itself should be transformed, and that natural sciences, must be eliminated. Science must be subordinated to the common ideal, the common good. And contemporary science is not of such a type, Comte asserts. All scientific academies have to be closed, since they do not function properly. As the French positivist puts it: “Their tendency, especially in France, is equally hurtful to science and morality. They encourage mathematicians to confine their attention exclusively to the first step in the scientific scale; and biologists to pursue their studies without any solid basis or definite purpose.”¹¹⁵ The purpose is merely to collect facts about the world. But what are these facts useful for? Science must be subordinated

¹¹³ Ibid., 282.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 264

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 270.

to the science of the society (the positive science). Physics, Chemistry, Biology themselves are not enough to provide us with answers of the most vital questions. It is time now to incorporate the aforementioned ideal in science. And the inevitable future of the latter is the positive science which will be led not only by our intellect but by our heart (feelings, morality) as well: “Our active faculties have always been guided by the Positive spirit: and by its extension to the sphere of Feeling, a complete synthesis, alike spontaneous and systematic in its nature, is constructed.”¹¹⁶ Spirituality will emerge in a novel form, unknown previously: “A new spiritual power will arise, complete and homogeneous in structure; coherent and at the same time progressive.”¹¹⁷

The new doctrine, called by Comte religion of Humanity, will thus be based upon the integration of the intellect, morality, and faith into one complete whole which will be subjected to the ideal of the common good. The reader may ask: well, but this does not seem like a religion at all. Where are the priests? Where are the ceremonies? Where is the church service? Comte envisages that this religion will have its priesthood. Priests will be philosophers, because only they can integrate reason, morality, and faith: “Thus the philosophers of the future become priests of Humanity, and their moral and intellectual influence will be far wider and more deeply rooted than that of any former priesthood.”¹¹⁸ The old priesthood, Christian priests, should be disallowed to become priests of the new religion, for the latter exceeds Christianity in all respects. Christianity had its good points, its advantages over polytheism, but now it is time for it to be replaced by a “more evolved” religion, Comte insists. The abstract God of Christianity

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 287.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 287.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 266.

stands too far from human beings; God is not human, and cannot be human. Man needs a new concept which will encompass all human beings, instead of isolating itself from mankind. Hence, the concept is Humanity itself. The morality of the new religion will be higher in comparison to the “old” morality, as Comte remarks: “All the points then in which the morality of Positive science excels the morality of revealed religion are summed up in the substitution of Love of Humanity for Love of God.”¹¹⁹ Comte adds the following: “It is a principle as adverse to metaphysics as to theology, since it excludes all personal considerations, and places happiness, whether for the individual or society, in the constant exercise of kindly feeling. To love Humanity may be truly said to constitute the whole duty of Man.”¹²⁰ There is no need for theology; there is no need for metaphysics. This assertion is not strange to the reader familiar with positivism: the philosophy of positivism does not adopt any metaphysical theory because metaphysics, as the proponents of positivism believe, is mere fiction, it is futile.

God is not needed, according to Comte, since God is only an “abstraction.” He is not real, the French positivist claims. Comte, says, Christianity is to be abandoned and replaced. As Comte asserts: “All our thoughts, feelings, and actions flow spontaneously to a common centre in Humanity, our Supreme Being; a Being who is real, accessible, and sympathetic, because she is of the same nature as her worshippers, though far superior to any one of them.”¹²¹ Man is thus perceived as a half-divine being, or rather as almost a divine being. Almost, since man will never become God; and still divine, because man will be the object of the prayers of the people.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 285.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 285.

¹²¹ Ibid., 317.

Comte's theory is materialistic as long as it rejects the existence of objective spiritual essence. The spiritual substance (the soul) exists only in man, Comte claims, and it is not immortal. On the other hand, the French philosopher is convinced that mankind as a whole represents something similar to the traditional concept of a spiritual substance, i.e., mankind itself possesses a soul. Notwithstanding, God is replaced with mankind (humanity). Comte's theory of the future religion, or the religion of Humanity, is the logical product of the rationalistic attitude as applied to religion. Although he speaks of faith here, faith does not play any part in this conception. Does faith have any applicability in such a scenario? Faith is needed when our intellect is not able to grasp a given principle, a certain essence. Mankind in general does not exceed our understanding; man knows what is the essence and function of mankind. The only thing which man is left with then is to serve. Comte explains that to serve means to love; that love is expressed by serving. This is clearly stated in the following passage: "The elevation of soul arising from the act of contemplating and adoring Humanity is not the sole object of religious worship. Above and beyond this there is the motive of becoming better able to serve Humanity."¹²² There is not any notion of heavenly beatitude, then; there is no heaven; there is not even a hereafter. There is only a doctrine in which a person must believe as to demonstrate our "love for Humanity." And Comte really believes that such "love" is superior to any love for God! Here is what he writes regarding this idea: "But the whole effect of Positivist worship will be to make men feel clearly how far superior in every respect is the synthesis founded on the Love of Humanity to that founded on the Love of God."¹²³

¹²² Ibid., 290.

¹²³ Ibid., 281.

Comte's religion is not actually a religion, it is rather a philosophical doctrine. It does not offer the individual any means to become a real believer. There is nothing to believe in. Everything is rationalized: through our intellect man can grasp the essence of the Supreme Being- Humanity. Faith and morality are merely assistants in doing so. The so-called "priests" and "churches" are of decorative character; they do not have functions at all.

The reader has probably noticed another dimension of Comte's conception- man is understood as the Supreme Being, but not man as an individual. Individuals, are comprehended as an illusion. They owe their existence to mankind as a whole; so it is mankind which has created them. In such a way mankind is seen as the Creator! What makes this theory invalid is the fact that man is a limited, finite being; and the same is attributed to mankind. Humanity is not eternal; it is not universal and ubiquitous. Mankind thus cannot replace God, for God is an absolute power which exceeds all which humanity is capable of.

Another issue is the fact that the French positivist does not provide us with any proof repudiating the reality of God. All he does is to bring forth some hypotheses belonging to materialism. Comte does not notice that religion without an objectively existing, powerful Supreme Being is not a real religion. If he wants to transform Christianity into a cult of Humanity, then he needs to show that Humanity is a superpower, that it is actually more than what one knows it to be.

Is Comte's conception of the religion of the future a product of his rationalistic attitude? Or is it rather a product of his incompetence in the field of theology? The rationalistic position present in Descartes' works is evident here. Everything in the world is rationally explainable, Descartes asserts, and all one needs to do is to use our intellectual powers. Descartes still does not claim that God is also knowable in a purely intellectual way. But Comte goes further by

merely denying the reality of God. God is not a rational concept. Therefore He cannot exist- this is the conclusion of Comte, a miserable conclusion.

The reader may think that Comte's conception is absurd and it cannot be formulated in the 21st century. The truth is that there have been other attempts to elaborate a doctrine of a rationalized Christianity. The so-called Christian rationalism is a doctrine established in the 1920s. It is a form of the rationalistic attitude applied to Christianity. However, there are some theosophic elements in it. Christian rationalism is a movement according to which God does not exist in the way in which Christians believe in Him. He has been "invented" by the human intellect, and the monotheistic concept of Him is quite naive (even childish). The movement claims that its approach to God is rational: God is understood as a universal, encompassing spirit, but He is not a person. Therefore, there is no Holy Trinity; there is no divine incarnation in man (Jesus Christ), and so forth. Christian theology is nonsense, for it has been based on a simple postulate- that God is a person and one can communicate with Him personally. No, the proponents of this movement claim: God is impersonal, He cannot be found personally. He can only be felt as a universal spirit present everywhere.

The movement calls itself "spiritual," and it denies any need to believe in God or gods: "Because Christian Rationalism is a school of spiritualization, not a religion, it has neither gods nor worshippers."¹²⁴ The movement then asserts that there is a spiritual substance in the world but it is rather possessed by human beings. However, all these beings are parts of the universal spirit: "Christian Rationalism, which has nothing to do with any of a large number of religious beliefs in the world, teaches that each spirit is a minute fraction of Universal Intelligence in the

¹²⁴ Christian Rationalism, "Gods and Religious Beliefs," par. 7, accessed August 1, 2018, <http://www.christian-rationalism.org/religious-beliefs.html>

process of evolution.”¹²⁵ There is nothing new here: this is the philosophy of Hinduism which teaches that the universal soul is the absolute, and every individual soul is only a part of it. The universal soul alone is immortal and eternal. The only difference is that here the word “soul” is replaced with “intelligence,” as it is said in the following passage: “This Universal Intelligence cannot be connected or compared with the definition of God by most religions.”¹²⁶ The proponents of Christian rationalism then claim that this is a completely novel doctrine which has never been taught before. It is based upon rational principles (whatever this means) and rejects any divine authority. Revelation is not real, it is always false, these people claim. All sacred books “may, however, contain the greatest absurdities, the clearest offences to decency and common sense. Truth may be changed to untruth, fairness to injustice, honour to dishonour. Logic may suffer all kinds of assaults and profanations, but no criticism is admitted”.¹²⁷ The very fact that there is some incoherence in the sacred books of all religions should mean, according to the proponents of this movement, that there is not any divine revelation in them. They go on with the following statement: “It was man who imagined, conceived, and created gods. He mentally conceived them with human form and with the same qualities and weaknesses that man has. A bodily god seems to be present in all religions.”¹²⁸

The reader will notice some of the basic principles of the rationalistic attitude here: that the world is completely cognizable by the intellect; that if something is not rational, then it does not exist; that all our experiences have to be explained in terms of the intellect; that man is finite and his intellectual powers are limited, but the intellect in general (as an abstraction) can

¹²⁵ Ibid., par. 8.

¹²⁶ Ibid., par. 8.

¹²⁷ Ibid., par. 6.

¹²⁸ Ibid, par. 3.

potentially gain a complete and exhaustive knowledge of the world. People are still not perfect beings, the proponents of Christian rationalism assert, and add the following: “As soon an individual begins to reason, in its first stage of an incarnation in human form, the incarnate spirit already feels, although vaguely and confusingly, the existence of a Superior Intelligence which he is unable to define.”¹²⁹ There is some room for feeling, then; but it is not clear what to do with faith. Is this a true religion, or is it rather a movement, or a doctrine? The same question was asked regarding Auguste Comte’s theory, and the answer should again be affirmative. This movement wants to goad Christian believers to be involved in an onslaught upon Christianity. Although it does not represent atheism, it is actually more dangerous than the latter.

Christians must be careful when someone tries to convince them that Christianity is an entirely rational religion. Faith cannot be fully submitted to the power of the intellect. Recently there have been some attempts in this country to distort the principle that faith is absolutely necessary. Paul Elliott addresses this topic in an article where he points out the following: “I am going to address the fallacy and dangers of humanistic rationalism. One must never forget that authentic Biblical Christianity is nothing if not rational- but it is based on Divine reason, not human reason.”¹³⁰ Rationalism should not be ignored as a whole, but it has to be applied with care and caution. Christianity would not have survived without the intellectual capacities of the first apologists, of the theologians who had to defend it against the ridiculous arguments of the pagans. Theology has been employing the principles of formal logic to prove its theses. However, humanistic rationalism aims at marginalizing our faith and replacing it with the

¹²⁹ Ibid, par. 2.

¹³⁰ Paul Elliott, “What Is Rationalism & Why Is It Dangerous?”, par. 1, accessed August 1, 2018, <http://www.teachingtheword.org/apps/articles/?articleid=75226>

intellect. As Elliott remarks: “The danger of humanistic rationalism is that it denies the reality of God’s revelation, and the pragmatism it produces denies the power of it- even in the church.”¹³¹ God’s revelation is an essential part of Christianity. If one takes this revelation as false, or for human fiction, then Christianity will lose its spirit. It will only be a remnant of the religion it was.

The fact mentioned above does not mean that the intellect must be dismissed at all. Some evangelical preachers today say the following, Elliot remarks: “Don’t think too much about Christianity and the Bible, just ‘believe’ and feel good about it, and let church leaders take you in any direction they please, without protest.”¹³² Thinking is necessary to analyze whether the material preached to us corresponds to what one knows from the renowned theologians and from the Christian heritage, which is an unfolding of divine revelation. The extreme rejection of the intellect does not belong to Christianity: “This is not Christian faith rooted in Divine reason. It is existentialist pragmatism couched in Christian jargon.”¹³³

Faith and the intellect are the two pillars of Christianity. To them, morality should be added which is the natural outcome of the Christian teaching. The rationalistic attitude requires from us either to reject the reality of God, or to replace God with another entity- in Comte’s case this is mankind as a whole. In the case of Communism, for example, this is the so-called proletariat (the workers’ class); in Nazi Germany, this ideal was the “pure race.” Another possible outcome of this attitude is atheism which was analyzed in the form of evolutionism in the first chapter. Atheists lack faith; or they do not want to submit themselves to their faith.

¹³¹ Ibid., par. 16.

¹³² Ibid., par. 9.

¹³³ Ibid., par. 9.

Everything should be “rational,” they assert; and because faith is not rational, it is not needed. Such people do not understand that their life consists of many acts of faith; that scientists themselves have faith in their theories; that the theory of evolution requires not only intellectual arguments but faith as well. No one in the world could adhere all the time to the rationalistic attitude. Even if there were, such a person would become an agnostic or a skeptic (in the ancient Greek sense) eventually... Man is not simply a rational living being; man is a believing being as well, and in this, he differs from all other living beings.

The Errors of the Evolutionist, Hedonist and Rationalist Worldviews

Summary:

This subchapter continues with our discussion of evolutionism, hedonism and rationalism as worldviews. It is divided into two parts: (1) hedonism, and (2) rationalism and evolutionism. As it is shown, all these three views cannot provide us with answers of essential questions regarding life and human existence. They are discussed from Christian standpoint.

We already introduced the terms hedonism, evolutionism, and rationalism. There are plenty of differences between these three worldviews. They will be referred to as views instead of doctrines, theories or attitudes, but they can also be conceived in every one of these three senses. Hedonism and rationalism, for instance, do not go hand in hand with each other. Rationalism usually is centered on the intellect, and not on one’s emotions or perceptions, or personal feelings. Hedonism argues in favor of the pleasure principle. Evolutionism, as it seems, stands aside, since it is perceived as a scientific view. Still, all three views have some similar traits. All of them point

to man as the center of the world; they adhere to anthropocentrism. Hedonism, although mainly an ethical doctrine, claims that there is nothing beyond what one sees; hence, only human beings have the right to control their lives. Rationalism is rather skeptical regarding the reality of God, and even if it accepts some divine existence, it says that such divinity is an abstraction, that it does not have any personal form. Evolutionism completely rejects the divine origin of man and replaces the creationist view with the idea that man emerged as a product of long-lasting evolution. Therefore, all these views have common basis: they say either that the divine does not exist, or that people are autonomous and do not need it.

The Shortcomings of Hedonism

As it was shown earlier, there are various dimensions of the term “hedonism.” Among them are an ethical dimension, psychological, and others. Ethical hedonism claims that our moral ideal should be pleasure. All principles of morality should be guided by one criterion: whether a certain action brings pleasure or it does not. Asceticism is thus seen as unnecessary and even harmful since it rejects earthly pleasures. Asceticism can be comprehended as the reverse of hedonism. No doubt, there can be moderate and extreme hedonism, as humans can sometimes go to extremes. Moderate hedonism, as it was remarked, partially influenced the author of Ecclesiastes, but still, he cannot be named a hedonist. Extreme hedonism identifies the moral good with pleasure, and says that morally bad acts are those that reduce pleasure or lead to pain. The philosophy of Epicurus argued in favor of moderate hedonism. As it is remarked by Georgia Harkness, the hedonism of Epicurus “was by no means the crass sensualism suggested by the oft-quoted ‘Eat, drink, and be

merry; for tomorrow we die;’ it centered in a refined enjoyment of congenial friends, simplicity of living.”¹³⁴ Hence, not every hedonist was radical in his convictions.

Hedonism is also not so easy to define. One of the good examples is utilitarianism. Are utilitarianists hedonists? Jeremy Bentham, the founder of this school of thought, based some of his ideas on Benedict Spinoza. Spinoza thought that every living being aims at existing as long as possible; therefore, the things which favor its existence are good; the obstacles to it are bad. Bentham writes similarly: “Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do...They govern us in all we do”.¹³⁵ Pain and pleasure are seen as the main ethical principles. But Bentham does not stop at the pleasure principle. He extends it further by introducing the term ‘utility.’ As he defines it: “By utility is meant that property in any object, whereby it tends to produce benefit, advantage, pleasure, good, or happiness.”¹³⁶ One can see clearly from this passage that Bentham’s utilitarianism goes further. Instead of the pleasure principle, it posits utility as the only moral criterion of good acts. It speaks even of benefits and advantages.

One can hardly imagine an activity that satisfies absolutely everyone in the world. There will always be some aspects in which a certain act will prove harmful to at least one human being in the world. This is what is meant when it is stated that Bentham’s criterion is relative. The things become even more complicated when another passage written by the British utilitarianist is cited: “The community is a fictitious body, composed of the individual persons who are considered as

¹³⁴ Georgia Harkness, *Christian Ethics* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1957), 16-17.

¹³⁵ Jeremy Bentham, *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press; London, New York, and Toronto: Henry Frowde, 1907), 1.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

constituting as it were its members. The interest of the community is... the sum of the interests of the several members who compose it.”¹³⁷ It is clear that one’s interest is always egoistic, it is centered on one’s personal needs, desires, motives, and so forth. The community is merely a collection of individuals; therefore, the community is an illusion. There are no interests of the community. There is only the individual, with his needs and acts. In such a way, hedonism is transformed into social philosophy.

However, Bentham’s theory is not completely clear in his writings. Is not happiness something different from pleasure?

Happiness, joy, and pleasure are different states. Pleasure is the easiest to discern: it can be felt immediately as it is a physiological process. Joy is an intermediary state between pleasure and happiness. It is partially physiological and partially spiritual (mental). The Book of Ecclesiastes indicates what the difference is: one should feel joy (more precisely, rejoice life), and not center all his life on pleasures and pursuit of them. Extreme asceticism is not the way to adhere to God’s commandments.

Still, pleasure is not to be rejected entirely. As human beings, man needs pleasure, but only moderately. Pleasure should and cannot be our goal in life. Furthermore, the self-indulgent pursuit of pleasure does not result in happiness. The latter is another state (partially psychological and partially spiritual). One can have a lot of pleasures, and still be unhappy. Happiness is a state in which the whole personality of a given human being ‘rises,’ it is overwhelmed by enthusiasm and positive feelings and thoughts. Happiness is a stable and constant state; it does not cease to exist unless there is a very traumatic experience.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 3.

Of course, Christians can speak of pleasure as something good, although not in absolute sense. Pleasure should be comprehended as having transitory character and it should be moderated. Pleasure cannot violate God's commandments, at least from Christian standpoint. Moreover, earthly pleasure is only an image, or a symbol, of true pleasure, of the bliss which the righteous will find in Heaven. As Jesus Christ tells us: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it" (Mat. 16:24-25). These words do not mean that pleasure is to be rejected completely, and pain should be pursued. It only says that the true believer has to be aware of the fact that true faith sometimes leads to pain and sorrow, and that one must endure them. In such a sense, one could (provisionally) speak of Christian hedonism, but this is a "hedonist" which puts stress on the spiritual hedone, on the state of beatitude which exists in heaven, when the righteous will face God. The real and eternal pleasure is God; and because it is eternal, one cannot say that the word "pleasure" is appropriate since pleasure is transitory. There is no right term to describe this state- even blissfulness will not cover it. As it is said in Matthew: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Mat. 11:28).

One of the negative consequences of hedonism as an ethical doctrine is extreme individualism and egocentrism. They are exemplified in tyranny. Tyranny is a political state in which a certain individual has all the power in his hands; he is the law, the constitution, the morality, etc. Tyranny is not based only on the pleasure-seeking of the tyrant; it is also dependent on the pain felt by the subordinated ones (they are nothing but slaves). More pain for his people means more pleasure for the tyrant. Tyranny is not found only in political affairs. It can be witnessed at a daily basis. The attitude of some company directors, politicians, parents, teachers, is nothing but tyranny. All they want is power; their employees, students, children, have to be

submissive, which means, to endure pain and sorrow. For that reason, hedonism as an attitude and a worldview has to be restricted.

On the other hand, Christianity offers the idea of sacrifice. One has to obey God. Furthermore, the principle of altruistic love (agape) is positioned on the top of the hierarchy of values. Christian love is selfless, it does not seek for any reward or appraisal. It is modest, meek and silent; Christian love is love-with-the-others. It does not stand itself as a separate category; it is always a part and a constituent of the community. As Georgia Harkness puts it: “The keynote in the life and teaching of Jesus with regard to man’s moral duty is found in ‘obedient love.’ ... One is required to seek to do the will of God by loving God supremely and one’s neighbor as one’s self.”¹³⁸ Christian ethics has been based on the principles exposed in Scripture. It is important to note that it postulates the reality of objective moral values which are absolute in themselves. They are not relative; they do not depend upon one’s personal needs and interests. Altruistic love (agape) is absolute; it makes us complete beings and connects us with God. Secular ethics, i.e., such an ethical system which rejects the reality of the divine, cannot go that far. It will always remain in the sphere of the relative, of the partial, of what is doubtful. This ethics is subjective.

On the other hand, Christian ethics cannot remain absolute isolated in itself, without any contact with other ethical (moral) systems. Many important insights can be found in the philosophies of Plato, Aristotle, Seneca, and other philosophers. Plato’s conception of the Good as the highest level of Being was used by Christian theologians, especially by Augustine. As Harkness observes: “Christian ethics is on unsafe ground if it either sells its birthright by accommodation to secular standards or refuses to respect and learn from the moral wisdom of the

¹³⁸ Harkness, *Christian Ethics*, 15.

ages.”¹³⁹ Nonetheless, Christianity is aware of its superior status in ethical aspect: it explains appropriately what is the meaning of life, of human existence, and it shows clearly that a person has to adhere to the same universal values all the time, without excuses. Hedonism is not capable of doing so.

One more point has to be remarked now. Christianity and Christian life are based on Christian ethics, but not every believer adheres to these principles. It happens- and it is natural- to go astray from them, to go in the wrong. Hedonism can be manifested in some practices, such as the indulgences as practiced in the Middle Ages by the Catholic Church. The very idea of material wealth should be foreign to the true believer and the Church in general. Not that the Church should be entirely poor and deprived of any secular rights and benefits; this is not what Christ wants from us to do. Luxury should be avoided; the believers and the Church itself have to be meek and to keep in mind that God observes His children all of the time.. Only Christianity can provide us with all essential answers about life, reality, and Being. Hedonism is simply a teaching; but Christianity is much more than that, it is not only teaching but also life.

The Shortcomings of Rationalism and Evolutionism

It is essential to keep in mind that rationalism and the rationalistic attitude are different things. Rationalism, strictly speaking, is only a current in epistemology which claims that all our knowledge has its source in the intellect. The rationalistic attitude (in the way it is manifested in the philosophy of Descartes, for example) is much more than that: it asserts that the world can be

¹³⁹ Ibid., 18.

known by using the intellect, and that man should follow it in all spheres of life. Descartes himself was not a firm rationalist in such a sense; he assumed that the sphere of faith cannot be dominated by the intellect. His conception of the innate ideas, among which is the idea of God, proves this fact. But Descartes lived in the pre-secularist era. At that time, religion and the Church still had primary importance.

The rationalistic attitude submits everything to reason. Our reason should approve our understanding of a certain principle, process, phenomenon, etc. There is no room left for faith. If a certain phenomenon is inexplicable, then it is perceived as non-existent. It is simply defined as an “illusion” or “deception.” Or it is said to be explicable, although potentially (in the future all processes and phenomena will be explained rationally).

The weak points of this attitude thus have been presented. The whole world, all Being cannot be explained by turning to our reason. Men are finite beings; they cannot be absolute. Therefore our knowledge is not absolute. There should always be some room for faith, for feelings, emotions, and so forth. As William James claims, the rationalistic attitude (or intellectualism, as he names it) can be harmful if employed whenever man tries to explain the world. Our intellect is capable of explaining various details from our daily life; but life in totality, the world in totality, Being in its wholeness, are not comprehensible by it. Moreover, the problem of the meaning of life cannot be solved by human reason.

From the standpoint of Christianity, the rationalistic worldview is not to be accepted, since it removes faith from our activities and even our life. Christianity is based on God’s Revelation. There is something mysterious in the world, something which cannot be subjected to our scrutiny and analyses. This can be seen in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians where St. Paul says the following:

The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ (2 Cor. 10:4-5).

Our “weapon” is the knowledge of God, our communication with Him, the true faith one has in Him. These are not “weapons of the world.” They are even not weapons; the knowledge of God is wisdom and Light. The Lord has to be obeyed, but not without rejecting the intellect: for, the intellect proves and shows clearly the reality of God. The Gospel requires from us to have trust in God, to love Him, and not to put anything above Him. Thus, the rationalistic attitude does not satisfy this demand. It takes human reason as the supreme authority and rejects anything which can be in contradiction with it. As St. Paul writes, “I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people” (Ephes. 1:18). These are the eyes of faith, the eyes which can see beyond the world of our perceptions (cf. 1 Thess. 2:13).

Christianity in itself does not reject the work of human reason. Intellect and faith should be in harmony, Augustine observes. Any Christian theologian has never denied this principle. But any attempt to transform Christianity into a “scientific religion” will fail. Christian rationalism does not have any firm ground. It tries to combine two elements which cannot be combined. Christian rationalism is an artificial product: it is not Christian at all. The rationalist worldview will never be able to grasp the essence of God, or, as John says, “cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). God is Wisdom and Knowledge; God is the Truth. By rejecting to have trust in Him,

one refuses to understand and know the Absolute Truth, to grasp the Absolute Essence, to contemplate the Absolute Being. All knowledge and wisdom are not human; they come from God, as St. Paul points out:

We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.

This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words (1 Cor. 2:12-13).

Humanity's wisdom can never surpass God's Wisdom. Scripture contains many crucial insights, facts, and assertions regarding our life and existence. To be sure, one of these is the creationist doctrine or the idea that God created the world. The world did not appear by accident; on the contrary, it was carefully planned and designed by God, but God as comprehended in Christianity. The creationist doctrine would remain the official explanation of the origin of life and man until the middle of the 19th century when Darwin's theory was published.

The basic tenets of the evolutionist doctrine, or the opposite of the creationist teaching. Evolutionists say that man is the end of evolution; human beings will cease to exist someday and then other, "superior" beings will appear as a product of evolution. Evolutionism thus lowers the status of man; man becomes merely an animal, although endowed with reason.

The evolutionist worldview is the view based on evolutionism. It comprises not only the sphere of natural sciences but morality as well. Evolutionists attempt at elaborating a "naturalist" conception of morality. Such a conception will claim that morality has developed in the course of time, with the evolutionary changes. Our morality changes gradually, although one is not able to

see and realize this at once. Furthermore, morality is nothing but an “evolutionary tool.” It aims at the survival of the certain individual or species. As it seems, the supreme moral value is survival at any cost. The sentence “only the fittest survives” means that one should be well adapted to one’s environment, meaning, to employ any possible method and tool to survive.

We will leave aside the theory of evolution and will turn to the attempts of its champions to formulate a “naturalist” (or “evolutionist”) ethics. A fascinating author, Arthur Keith, devotes one of his books on this topic. It contains several essays written during or after the Second World War. Keith personally is convinced that such a terrible war disproves that there is true evolution, and that if there is evolution, it cannot be held to exist in moral aspect. Any attempt to base morality on evolution is wrong, Keith is convinced. He refers to the idea of C. Waddington who claims that: “Any circumstance or condition which helps man along his evolutionary course is to be counted morally good or ethical; anything which hinders man’s evolutionary course is to be regarded as morally bad or evil.”¹⁴⁰ Keith disagrees with this view: ethics cannot be reduced to a scientific formula. Moral categories do not coincide with evolutionary processes. Morality is an entirely different sphere; it should be seen as a separate field of study.

In one of his essays, Arthur Keith analyzes the Nazi ideology. It is founded on evolutionist principles, he remarks; Darwin and his disciples influenced the ideologists of National-socialism (Nazism).” As Keith says, Adolf Hitler regarded the emergence of the Aryan race as the end of the evolution. Aryans were the “supreme race,” and they stood above all other “races.”¹⁴¹ This is a logical result of the attempt to apply evolutionism to morality.

¹⁴⁰ Arthur Keith, *Essays on Human Evolution* (London: WATTS & CO, 1946), 6.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

Keith turns to another case of an attempt to combine evolutionism and ethics- eugenics. Francis Galton, he observes, “taught a somewhat similar evolutionary doctrine- namely, that if our nation was to prosper we must give encouragement to the strong rather than to the weak; a saying which may be justified by evolution, but not by ethics as recognized and practised by civilized peoples.”¹⁴² In brief, only the “best genes” should survive, and the “weak genes” should disappear. Ethics will be transformed into evolutionary process; it will change and be modified. It can even be said that ethics, will cease to exist. As Keith writes, if one follows entirely “the evolutionary law” then “we have to abandon the hope of ever attaining a universal system of ethics, for...the ways of national evolution, both in the past and in the present, are cruel, brutal, ruthless, and without mercy.”¹⁴³ This is valid also of individuals and their struggle with each other. Why is this ethics based on egoism and individual needs and desires? It is not possible to elaborate such an ethics, since ethics should lead to cooperation between human beings, not to wars. This is the conclusion of Arthur Keith.

There is no doubt that an evolutionist ethics would be opposite of Christian ethics. The latter teaches altruistic love, not “survival of the fittest.” Man has the responsibility to care for one another, to love even our enemies. What to say then about the philosophy instructing us to “survive”? What is defined as survival? It is merely long existence on earth. What is beyond death? Evolutionism says: nothing. Christianity answers: everything. This is the other fundamental difference between Christianity and evolutionism: the idea of the immortal soul and the reality of Hereafter. The idea that God created the world penetrates the whole Scripture; it is the basis of our faith in God (since, man is an image of God). Not only the Book of Genesis, but other passages as

¹⁴² Ibid., 9.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 12.

well point to this fact (cf. Ps. 33:6, Is. 45:12). They clearly demonstrate that Christian faith is not compatible with the theory of evolution in the way it has been exposed by Darwin, Huxley, Haeckel, Dawkins, and other evolutionists. By saying that there was evolution and man emerged as its product, man rejects the omnipotence of God and replace Him with what one calls nature.¹⁴⁴

The disagreement between Christian ethics and the evolutionist worldview can be summarized in the following ten points according to this author:

1. Creationism holds that the world appeared as a result of intelligent action. Evolutionism, on the other hand, claims that the world appeared by random chance.

2. According to Darwin, man appeared as a result of a series of mutations and gene recombinations. This completely denies the assertion that man is different from animals in a qualitative manner (i.e., man is endowed with abilities and power which animals cannot have). Furthermore, in the Bible can be found several passages proving that every righteous person was chosen (to some extent) by God from the very beginning (cf. 1 Sam. 16:7-12; Ps. 139:16; Jer. 1:5; Mat. 24:31, 25:34; Rom. 8:29-30; 1 Cor. 2:7; Gal. 1:15).

3. The God of the Bible is a Sustainer, which is even more than Creator and Savior. God sees what is happening and knows what will happen in the future. He is sustaining His creation all the time (cf. Gen. 1:7-8, Neh. 9:6; Esth. 4:14; Ps. 104:30, 145:16, 147:9, and others).

4. Logically, God is not only the Creator and Sustainer but the Judge as well. This is connected with the idea of the reality of Hereafter (afterlife). The righteous will have new glorious bodies after the Judgment Day (cf. Mat. 5:22,29,30; 1 Cor. 15:42-53; 2 Pet. 2:4-10).

¹⁴⁴ The notion of nature has changed over time. Christian theologians perceived nature as created by God. For them, nature was the same as essence. As late as in the 18th century, the modern notion of nature appeared- as a realm completely independent from the spiritual.

5. The theory of evolution is not present in Scripture in any form. It is wrong to say that one can find passages confirming the reality of evolution in the Bible. The idea of Creation, on the contrary, is present throughout the Bible (it is mentioned 64 times).

6. The evolutionist worldview is based on materialism and physiological reductionism, i.e. it maintains that nothing spiritual exists. The Bible teaches that the act of Creation was a supernatural act, not natural (it does not have only material dimensions) (cf. Gen. 2:7; Ps. 33:6,9; Ps. 148:5; 2 Cor. 4:6).

7. The sinful nature of man is rejected by evolutionism. The logical consequence of all this is the attempt to base morality on the theory of evolution and materialism (hedonism is one of their exemplifications). Man is understood as a completely natural being, hence there cannot be any word of sinning- nature cannot sin. This stands in opposition to the Christian doctrine of Original sin.

8. According to the Bible, life (including human existence) has a purpose. Evolution rejects it and says that man is merely here and now; nothing more. One cannot know if there will be tomorrow; a person cannot tell whether mankind will continue its existence in the future.

9. The death of Jesus Christ becomes meaningless from the standpoint of evolutionism. There is no any sense in His Sacrifice; for, evolution goes merely further (besides the fact that evolutionism rejects Original sin). Christian eschatology, on the other hand, claims that human history moves toward Judgment Day, to the End of the world.

10. Scientific evidence does not confirm the veracity of the theory of evolution according to the current state of knowledge. There are plenty of discrepancies. One of the facts that cannot be explained by evolutionists is that man does not witness any evolution today. Even human beings

should change over time; human beings were and are the same. Ancient civilizations (which date back even to 6th millennium BC) prove that man has been always a rational, intelligent being.

These are only some of the points of criticism leveled against the evolutionist worldview. Our goal was to prove that the idea of the creation of the world by God and the theory of evolution are not compatible; they enter into direct contradiction with each other. A true believer cannot hold onto the theory of evolution- at least, not in all its entirety. The believer will always be convinced that the world was created by God, that life appeared according to God's plans, and that our existence on earth has a special purpose. There is no way to say that man appeared on earth as the product of a random process called evolution, and that apes are our "relatives." On the contrary: man is qualitatively different from all animals. Of all living beings, only man can think, can conduct logical inferences, can create, can search for the meaning of life; only humans can have belief in God. This is what makes us human beings.

Conclusion

The main topic of our discussion has been the assumption that man is a rational being, i.e., man is endowed with intellectual capacity. This is one of the most popular definitions which can be found in the works of the majority of philosophers. The rationalist attitude puts stress exclusively on this definition. Man should use only his intellectual power to gain knowledge about himself, about others, and about the world. Science thus should be the dominating sphere of human activity, and all others have to be subordinated to it. Faith cannot and should not be reduced to a mere intellectual practice. Man needs faith, and faith can help gain some

knowledge about entities which are either unknowable or hard to be grasped. The immortality of the soul is not a subject of intellectual discourse; it rather needs faith. For that reason, Comte, rejects the idea of immortality.

Man from the Radical Dualist Standpoint. Body and Soul

Man is merely a living being like all other living beings, but endowed with intellect. On the other hand, idealism underlines the fact that there are many acts and processes typical only of man; and these processes cannot be explained in terms of materialism. The theory of evolution is applied to every field of human activity (religion, art, morality, and even family life and language). But the very fact that people believe in the immortality of the soul, or in the reality of a Supreme Being (God) is not explicable by evolutionists. All that they can say is that these conceptions are products of an illusion. But why did they appear at all? People have been observing the mental activities and processes in man. It is not hard to notice the difference between the body movements, and our thoughts and feelings. There were various explanations to this question, but the main one was the following: because man has a soul or an invisible substance which functions differently in comparison to his body.

Now, the present chapter will take for granted the view that man possesses a soul and that the soul is not merely a function of the body; and correspondingly, that thought is not simply a

by-product of the brain. But even among the adherents to this view there are discussions regarding the relation mind-body (soul-body, spirit-matter, and so forth- various phrases are signifying the same relation). Is our body merely a place inhabited by our soul? Or is the body a prison, a tomb in which the soul is a captive? Or, is the body in constant interaction with the soul? As the reader will see, even the philosophy of idealism has its different versions. The present chapter will attempt at clarifying the relation body-mind by contrasting the Gnosticist (more particularly, Manichean) radical dualism to the contemporary Christian understanding. Man is one whole and to comprehend his soul and body as completely separated entities (and substances) is wrong.

Radical Dualism: the Soul as a Captive of the Body

Summary:

Gnosticism, and particularly the Manichean doctrine of the relation body-soul/mind will be analyzed here. The Manicheans understand the soul as an innocent entity, which was captured by evil powers and imprisoned in the body. To argue against this thesis reference will be made to Saint Augustine's idea of the unity of soul and body.

Before starting our analysis, it is necessary to remark on the existence of four approaches to the mind-body problem:

1. Radical dualism- the soul is immortal. It can exist independently without the body (Gnosticism).

2. Moderate dualism- the soul is immortal. During our earthly life it is connected to the body. After death, the soul departs to Hereafter. The body is corruptible and can never be resurrected (philosophical idealism- Plato, Hegel).

3. Monism- body and soul are only two manifestations of the same essence. The only difference between them is that the soul is positioned at a higher level than the body (matter). Both can be transformed into one another (Indian religions and philosophical doctrines).

4. Physiological reductionism- rejects the immortality of the soul; the soul is simply a function of the body (philosophical materialism- Holbach, Karl Marx).

Two remarks should be made here:

1. The difference between soul and spirit will be discussed later, so the nature of spirit will not be examined here;

2. Moderate dualism could be attributed to Christianity only partially, since Christianity teaches that besides the earthly body, there exists also the resurrected body, which means that it is possible to comprehend the human body as incorruptible (but only in a special sense). Thus, there is a fifth approach positioned in-between moderate dualism and monism.

Radical dualism is described as such because of its negative attitude toward the body. There is an evident contempt in the writings of some Gnostics as well as Neoplatonists. Generally, they perceived the body as something unnecessary, as an entity that often prevents the soul from grasping the ultimate truth. Some philosophers saw it even as disgusting. There is nothing worthy in the body itself; if it has any value, it is because the soul inhabits it. The soul is noble, endowed with virtues, and the body is the primary cause of sin, it forces the soul into

temptations. Radical dualists took ontological dualism as their point of departure. The world is made of two substances- matter and spiritual substance, they claim. There are two opposite powers which created these two substances. Radical dualists believe the evil force created that matter, and that the soul must fight against the latter to free herself from the “prison.” This type of ontology was not typical only of Gnosticism- it can be found in other philosophical as well as religious doctrines. There was similar opposition, for example, in ancient Egyptian mythology. Mithraism, the origin of Manicheanism, was an ancient Persian religion which emphasized the eternal struggle between the good and the evil. It described the world as a giant arena of this struggle. The two powers at odds with each other are embodied in the deities of Ormuzd and Ahriman. Mithra (with whom the religion’s name is associated) fights at the side of Ormuzd, the god of light. According to Mithraism, the evil power will be finally defeated in a cosmic battle; and our existence on earth is only a small part of the battle. Ahriman can thus be compared to the Biblical Antichrist. The Light and the Darkness themselves can be defined in the following way, as Hector Serri, one of the researchers on Gnosticism, observes: “Light resides in knowledge, revelation, the soul, the heavens, repose and endurance, that is, the Good; whilst Darkness resides in ignorance, matter, the body and unrest, briefly, the Evil” (Serri 1988-1990, 78). There are many dichotomic pairs: knowledge vs. ignorance, soul vs. matter, etc. Dichotomies, or pairs of opposed concepts, are very important for both Mithraism and Manicheanism.

The contempt regarding the body had its origin as early as in Plato. Before Plato, no one had defined the body in such a way. Man had been seen as a whole entity. The fundamental problem for philosophers was the First Principle- whether Water, Fire, Air, or Mind. The attitude which one should have toward one’s body was analyzed by the hedonists. Plato was interested, still, in the immortality of the soul. In order to demonstrate its immortality, he wanted to contrast

it to the corruptible body which lasts for only a short time. The body is only temporary, he asserted; but there is credible evidence to believe that this is not the case with the soul. Thus, Plato needed such a contrast- for, if these are two separate substances, then it is not illogical to claim that one of them is immortal. But if they are mixed, or at least connected with each other, then it would be harder to prove such immortality. Another point to be remarked on here is the fact that Plato was under the influence of Egyptian mysticism and it is possible that he derived his conception from Egyptian doctrines. The conception of Plato that the soul is “imprisoned” in the body (found in the Republic, in Phaedo, and other works) is emphasized and discussed frequently. At any rate, it influenced the various philosophers belonging to Neoplatonism, part of which was Gnosticism.

We will start our analysis of radical dualism first with a short overview of Gnosticism according to the account given by Hans Jonas in his book *The Gnostic Religion*. It should be clear that Gnosticism is the esoteric part of Neoplatonism (which means, Gnosticism was a philosophy of the “devoted ones”). There are some ancient works which have been analyzed and examined, and the information about Gnosticism comes from them, as well as from some Christian theologians (including Saint Augustine) who criticized Neoplatonism. Therefore, one cannot be absolutely sure that what is known is certain and corresponds to the doctrine of Neoplatonism. This is the reason for the debate over Gnosticist dualism which is present nowadays. Hans Jonas’ work relies on classical sources and interpretations, but new ones can appear and show some of the philosophers in a novel light.

Jonas presents Gnostic ontology first. The dualism of matter and spirit is present from the very beginning: “To the divine realm of light... the cosmos is opposed as the realm of darkness. The world is the work of lowly powers which though they may mediately be descended from

Him do not know the true God and obstruct the knowledge of Him in the cosmos over which they rule.”¹⁴⁵ This understanding is common even for some of the renowned Neoplatonists such as Porphyry (but not of Plotinus who is not ontological dualist, but still feels contempt for the body). Now, the soul is “imprisoned” (for some reason which differs in every philosopher) and has to be freed from the “prison.” As Jonas observes: “Enclosed in the soul is the spirit, or ‘pneuma’ (called also the ‘spark’), a portion of the divine substance from beyond which has fallen into the world; and the Archons created man for the express purpose of keeping it captive there.”¹⁴⁶ Archons are the Rulers, or personified deities which control “the lower world.” They are the creators of what one can see, touch, feel, etc. The real God stands above them, but He does not have direct control. Archons are not necessarily evil rulers; this depends on the interpretation of the particular Gnostic philosopher. The visible world itself is not evil, but there is some presence of evil in it, as Jonas remarks: “The existing world, ‘this’ world, is a mixture of light and darkness, yet with a preponderance of darkness: its main substance is darkness, its foreign admixture, light.”¹⁴⁷

In some sense, the soul is “imprisoned.” According to the Manicheans, this takes place when the soul tries to fight against the evil power. Gnostics call this event “fall”, “sinking,” etc. As Jonas puts it: “The soul or spirit, a part of the first Life or of the Light, fell into the world or into the body.”¹⁴⁸ This happens against the will of the soul; it is forced to do it. Now, its task is to free itself from the “chains.” The body itself tries to restrict this ambition; it makes the soul blind and controls it. The soul forgets about reality, about the Higher World (which Plato calls the

¹⁴⁵ Hans Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001), 42.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 44.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 57.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 62.

World of Ideas), and then it is captured for life. Then it will probably reincarnate and will have the same temptations again and again until it succeeds in escaping from the bodily desires and lust.

Based on this assumption, the Gnostics elaborated the so-called by Jonas pneumatic morality which is defined as follows: “Generally speaking, the pneumatic morality is determined by hostility toward the world and contempt for all mundane ties. From this principle, however, two contrary conclusions could be drawn, and both found their extreme representatives: the ascetic and the libertine.”¹⁴⁹ Asceticism is the most common moral ideal: if the soul wants to be liberated, it must overcome the temptations of the body. It has to suppress all the desires of the body. One of the ways to do this is by asceticism; another way is to submit itself to the contemplation of the Highest world (or The Good in Plato’s ontology). The flesh should suffer for the soul to be “freed” from its “imprisonment.”

As the Christian reader can observe, there is almost nothing wrong in the ideas presented above. Asceticism is accepted by Christianity as well. Why should one stand against and oppose Gnosticism, then?

There are two assumptions in Gnosticism which should make every Christian worried. The first one is that the good and evil powers are equal and co-eternal. The second assumption is the idea that the soul must turn away from the body completely. They are dangerous because they reject the meaning of our earthly existence. The easiest way to overcome the captivity of the soul, the Gnostics say, is by eliminating our carnal desires. This also includes any care of one’s body and even treatment of any disease. In the Book of Ecclesiastes, it is clearly written that one can rejoice in life, but always with the acknowledgment of the provident care and reality of God.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 46.

God is observing us all the time; no one will escape His judgment. Man should rejoice moderately, without submitting himself to lust. And not every desire is actually of a carnal character; some desires can be related to helping others, taking care of others. Carnal are those desires which are fully controlled by the body, and the soul is completely subordinated to the body.

Not every Gnostic adheres to what Jonas refers to as pneumatic morality. Manicheanism was the most notorious example of its radicalization. Manicheanism had its origin in Mithraism. Mithraism was among the most popular religions on the European continent in the first centuries AD. It was the main foreign rival to Christianity within the Roman Empire (given that syncretic Roman polytheism was the official religion). Unlike other Gnostics, Mani (the founder of Manicheanism) was not under the influence of Greek philosophy. His teaching was essentially Persian (Mithraist) in its dualism describing the world as inhabited by two co-eternal powers, the good and the evil one. Mani lived in the 3rd century AD, and he was eager to bring together various elements of Christianity, Neoplatonism, the Persian religions (Mithraism and Zoroastrianism), and even Buddhism. He wanted to establish a new religion which would be disseminated worldwide. As Hans Jonas remarks, the teaching of Mani “was not to penetrate the secret aspects of a given revelation and to establish a minority of higher initiation within an existing church but to supply a new revelation himself, a new body of Scripture, and lay the foundation for a new church that was meant to supersede any existing one.”¹⁵⁰ The truth is that Manicheanism was strongly influential, and it even had some impact on Saint Augustine’s thought, as he himself admitted. In the course of time, Manichean ideas would return again and

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 206.

again on the European continent by penetrating into the Byzantine Empire, Italy, and reaching France, where the Cathars would appear in the 11th -12th centuries.

The teaching of Mani is rooted in various doctrinal elements found in other religions or philosophies. One of these is Mithraism, another-Zoroastrianism. The influence of the gnostic Valentinus was also important. Hans Jonas observes that the philosophy of Valentinus can be called gnostic speculation (of Egyptian type). As Jonas states:

“The distinguishing principle of the type is the attempt to place the origin of darkness, and thereby of the dualistic rift of being, within the godhead itself, and thus to develop the divine tragedy, the necessity of salvation arising from it, and the dynamics of this salvation itself, as wholly a sequence of inner-divine events.”¹⁵¹ Valentinus proposed an ontological explanation of the origin and essence of evil. He also turned to the problem how evil appeared on earth, and demonstrated that it was brought about by God. Only the right knowledge will save us from the influence of the evil, Valentinus claimed. When one knows how the evil emerged, he will be able to overcome it. This is the core of the philosophy of this Egyptian gnostic.

Manicheanism used these ideas and advanced them further. However, it was not only a philosophical teaching. Manicheans turned also to social and political problems. The popularity of Manicheanism can be easily explained by observing the political and social context of its principles. The assumption that there are two powers, the good and the evil power, and that the world as it is was created by the evil one, has serious political ramifications. The legal political power, the legal institutions are, therefore, part of the world created by the evil power, by the devil, so they must be rejected and resisted. For that reason the ideas of Manicheanism were taken by the proponents of many heresies, and the members of these heretical movements were

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 174.

always poor and uneducated people believing that they fight against the evil. Manicheanism thus should not be underestimated precisely because of its social and political impact; its worldview itself is not that original, nor is it logically sound. However, from the standpoint of the poor peasants, it explains quite well the fact that the ruling class speaks of its “divine origin,” which according to the Catharian view means that the ruler’s power comes from the devil.

Now, let’s turn to Manichean cosmology. Two powers co-exist, as it is said: the Light and the Darkness. At some point in time the Darkness becomes hostile toward the Light, for this is its nature- to be hostile, to hate, to destroy. As Jonas describes this process: “The perception of the Light excites in the Darkness envy, greed, and hate, and provokes its aggression. Its first onrush is wild and chaotic, but in the progress of the war it develops devilish intelligence.”¹⁵² The Darkness is chaotic at first, but later it develops some capacities and powers that would allow it to overcome the Light. Such an example is the creation of man: “In the fashioning of man and the device of sexual reproduction it later achieves a stroke of Mephistophelian ingenuity: all this for the purpose of possessing and holding the Light and escaping from the odiousness of its own company.”¹⁵³ According to Mani, the Light and the Darkness co-exist naturally, absolutely separated. But the Darkness wants to turn against the Light (because this is its nature). The Light then creates the Primal Man. He is not a real man, but rather an archetype of man (a supernatural being). The primal man uses the soul as a weapon against the Darkness, but he is defeated and then gives up his soul. In such a way the soul is captured by the Darkness.¹⁵⁴ What is interesting is the fact that the Darkness was translated as Hyle in Greek

¹⁵² Ibid., 214.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 214.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 218-20.

which means “matter.” Thus, in the Greek-speaking world, this confrontation was described as a struggle between the Light and Matter. It cannot be known for certain what Mani means by using the term “darkness.” Probably he means the evil power, but not precisely matter as such; for, according to his understanding, the matter was created much later by the evil power.

The Darkness is led by its desire to have the better; because it conceives of the Light as being the better. As Jonas specifies this motive: “The ‘desire’ is not for being but for possessing the better; and its recognition is one not of love but of resentment.”¹⁵⁵ Unlike Greece, where Eros (as described by Plato in his *Symposium*) is associated with the desire to have the better, in the Persian mindset it is rather affiliated with destruction. Perhaps the act of capturing the primal man’s soul is the fulfillment of this desire. The soul is captured and imprisoned, and the Light then is forced to create the visible world. Hans Jonas points out: “The emissary of Light- Primal Man with his fivefold armament the Soul- in spite of his success in stopping the enemy is caught in the Darkness, ‘hard pressed,’ benumbed and unconscious, and ‘thereby God was compelled to create the world,’ for the sake of unmixing what had been mixed.”¹⁵⁶ This means, the Light is mixed with some darkness and this should be undone. The world is created; but the Darkness also takes part in the process of creation. Matter and man’s body are its creations: “The human body is of devilish substance and- in this trait exceeding the general derogation of the universe- also of devilish design. Here the Manichaeian hostility to body and sex, with its vast ascetic consequences, is provided with a mythological foundation.”¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 215.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 221.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 227.

The Christian believer will be shocked by the latter assertion describing the Manichean worldview. The idea that God is the only Creator of the world is rejected! God (or the Light) is merely a co-creator of the world, and His influence is not that strong. This directly repudiates any divinity of God; for, a God Who is co-eternal is not a true God. God is omnipotent and omniscient; and if there is a power which is equally omnipotent and omniscient, then His omnipotence will be restricted. Now, restricted omnipotence is a contradiction. Therefore, such a God is not a real God. From the standpoint of sound logic, God is either omnipotent or He does not exist. There is no middle way.

But Mani believes that such a way exists. There is one fundamental reason for this. The presence of evil in the world cannot be clarified in terms of an omnipotent God. If God is omnipotent and he is good (the latter assertion is absolutely necessary), why is there any evil in this world? Theodicy is defined as every attempt to justify the presence of evil in spite of the existence of a good and omnipotent God. Manichean theodicy states that God is not absolutely omnipotent, and this is the only reason for the existence of evil. In short, God is justified: He cannot control the presence of evil.¹⁵⁸ Perhaps this is the main theological advantage of Manicheanism over Christianity. Christianity offers its own answer to the question; but Manicheanism in general does not even need to engage in this discussion, since it relegates God into a co-eternal, semi-powerful entity. Uneducated and illiterate people prefer simple and evident (for them) ideas- this is the advantage of Mani's teaching. As many other religions, the main goal of Manicheanism is to lead the individual to salvation. Although human beings play only an insignificant part in a giant world process. Man's task is to disseminate the truth to others and to practice the pneumatic morality.

¹⁵⁸ Mark S. Scott, *Pathways in Theodicy: an Introduction to the Problem of Evil* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 82-4.

Manicheans believe that the Light will finally overcome its formidable enemy. As Hans Jonas remarks: “Thus the history of the world and of man is a continual process of the freeing of Light, and all the arrangements of the universe like all events of history are considered from this point of view.”¹⁵⁹ The description of this process by the Manicheans indicates that the final victory will belong to the Light; this is their belief and their hope. To this they add the belief that the Sun itself will lead to the defeat of the enemy. This is the process called cosmic revolution: the Sun purifies the world from the evil, as Jonas explains: “The universe’s instrument of salvation is the cosmic revolution, especially that of the sun... That is, the sun automatically, as a process of nature, extracts, attracts, and purifies Light from the Hyle.”¹⁶⁰ Hence, even a material object such as the Sun could take some part in the process.

Christianity does not teach that the good and the evil powers are co-eternal or equal. The good has an ontological advantage over evil. Evil, within the Christian theological framework, is seen as a deviation. It is a former good or a good which has gone wrong. The day will come when all evil will disappear. Christian theology argues in favor of the idea that the evil has objective reality only partially; for, it cannot be superior to the good.

It is true, as the careful reader will remark, that the Holy Bible contains some passages about the final battle between Jesus Christ and the devil. But this battle will not be fought to save mankind. Christ is Our Saviour. The battle will cleanse the world from everything evil, from everything devilish. This conception is nowhere near to the idea of a final confrontation between two powers equal in strength. The battle of Armageddon will be rather the last attempt of the evil power to regain the territory already lost. There will not be any chance for it to be victorious.

¹⁵⁹ Jonas, *Gnostic*, 233.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 233.

With this final act of rebellion, they will only lead to their destruction. Ergo, dualism cannot be attributed to the Book of Revelation where the description of the battle is presented (cf. Rev. 16-19).

The Manicheans thus see the soul only as a small part of the giant arena of struggle between both powers. It is not very clear whether they believe that if all human beings succeed in “cleansing” their souls, the final victory will be achieved. Do human beings, have any impact on the course of the battle? More likely is to say: no. All mankind can do is take care of their souls in a way which will prevent them from falling into temptations.

Still, there is some difference between the conception of soul and the one of spirit in Manicheism. The spirit stands higher than any soul. The soul was created; and the spirit- not. As Hans Jonas states, gnostic dualism “regards the ‘soul’ itself, the spiritual organ of man’s belonging to the world, as no less than his body an effluence of the cosmic powers and therefore as an instrument of their dominion over his true but submerged self.”¹⁶¹ The spirit is of divine essence, and divinity itself is spiritual. The soul, on the other hand, is individual; for that reason it is vulnerable and susceptible to external influences (of matter, for instance). It is not clear in what way the Manicheans envisage the process of the salvation of man, but it is certainly associated with their eschatology, or the doctrine of the end of the world. The world will end some “day,” and then the soul will be saved from its terrible imprisonment. It can be hypothesized that probably the Manicheans believed that the world of the future would be completely “cleansed” of matter; hence, there would be only souls, without bodies; or maybe there will be only spirits, and souls will disappear together with the bodies. For, the soul is individual and it is not a captive of the body, but it is somehow connected to the body,

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 269.

voluntarily or not. And if the body ceases to exist, one part of the soul itself disappears. It is logical then to assume that Manichean eschatology depicts a world full of spirits and Light, without anything material. Still, Mani does not explain what will be the future of human beings: if they are transformed completely into spiritual beings, will they remain human beings? Or maybe human beings will have played their part, and then only the divine powers will remain? At any rate, for Mani's teaching man is not that important; the battle between the two great powers is fought between them, and man cannot do anything but observe it. Of course, pneumatic morality instructs human beings to inculcate certain moral conduct, to do this and to avoid that. But no one could be sure that he/she will be saved respectively to whatever he/she does. This is the task of the good powers, of the Light. Humans are fragile beings and are susceptible to evil.

This understanding of the presence and origin of evil was quite interesting to St. Augustine, one of the most renowned theologians in human history. If one accepts the principles of Manicheanism, there would not be any need to elaborate theodicy or an explanation as to why God allows evil to take place. As Hector Serri observes: "The Manichaeans did not try to put the problem of evil aside, a factor which certainly kept Augustine within their clutches. Indeed by their furnishing a 'corner' for evil in their myth-saturated universe, they made it a fundamental principle in their mode of thought."¹⁶² Furthermore, the explanation itself was very simple and could be grasped even by uneducated people, let alone educated persons like St. Augustine: "The borderline between the good and evil was therefore that between the material and the

¹⁶² Hector Serri, "Augustine, the Manichaean, and the Problem of Evil," *Augustinian Panorama* 5-7 (1988-1990), 80.

spiritual.”¹⁶³ This explains quite well the interest of St. Augustine to this radical dualistic teaching. What does St. Augustine himself say about it?

In his *Confessions* St. Augustine describes how he fell into the trap of the Manicheans, and how he was able to escape from it later. By arguing in favor of free will, and by maintaining that the main cause of the presence of evil is the free will itself, St. Augustine repudiated Manichean dualism. As he says, he began with the following question: “Whence is evil therefore, seeing God who is good, hath created all these things good.”¹⁶⁴ St. Augustine overcame this dualism by speculating on the nature of evil. As he states, evil is only temporary and it does not have the power which dualists attribute to it. God is the Creator of the world and he made all things good; but some of them became corrupted, or are vulnerable to corruption, St. Augustine claims: “All things were made by him, and without him was nothing made. In that which was made, was life, and the life was the light of men.”¹⁶⁵ The good can be seen everywhere: in man, in animals, in plants; mountains and oceans are beautiful, therefore they are also good; the starry sky is good, and so forth. Who can deny this? And the good can be found even in things which seem evil. As the renowned theologian admits: “And manifested unto me it was, that even those things be good, which yet are corrupted.”¹⁶⁶ St. Augustine adds: “For each is good, and at the same time all together very good, because thou our God hast made all things very good.”¹⁶⁷

¹⁶³ Ibid., 81.

¹⁶⁴ St. Augustine, *Confessions*, vol. I. (London: William Heinemann; New York: Macmillan, 1912), 349; VII, 5.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, 367; VII, 9

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 375; VII, 12.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 377; VII, 12.

St. Augustine asserts that God created all things good but later some of them became corrupted. Let's take this for granted. How did they become imbued with evil and why? What made them go astray from the goodness they were endowed with? Perhaps this is somehow related to the evil powers. Christianity does not deny the existence of the devil. But the devil is a fallen angel; that is, he rebelled against God. He was not evil in his essence from the very beginning. He became evil because he rebelled. But is the devil so strong as to multiply the existent evil in the world? Not exactly. What could be said to account for evil then?

Our understanding of evil is wrong. Man usually conceives evil as being involved in all natural disasters, in all possible forms of suffering of human beings as well as all other living beings. From such a point of view, the presence of evil in the world is not completely explicable. There are so many examples of it that we cannot but assume that the devil is a very powerful entity, maybe even co-powerful with God. But it is known by definition that the latter is incorrect: the devil is a fallen angel. Therefore he cannot be as mighty as God.

If granted another point of view on what is called evil, it will be demonstrated that it is far from ubiquitous, and that good things are more frequent. Natural disasters, and all other difficulties that man is confronted with in this world can also be comprehended as trials, as tests to which humans are subjected. They help man grow stronger, become wiser and become more humane. Without the presence of suffering, man would have been deprived of the opportunity to grow spiritually. Of course, someone might object: God could have created a world with other principles, other regulations where one could grow spiritually without being put to the test. The problem is still with our free will: in such a world one would have been endowed again with freedom of will. This freedom itself would have allowed us to make wrong decisions. Then mankind would have caused suffering to other human beings, or disasters of some kind.

Therefore, the problem would have remained even in a “better world.” Our free will is the root; and besides, our understanding of suffering is wrong. Suffering is not always evil, and evil is not always tantamount to suffering. Sometimes pleasures can also ruin a specific person. Alcohol brings pleasure to the alcohol-addicted person; but alcohol is a real evil to them. It damages them; it destroys their moral conduct, their spiritual strength, and removes any traces of faith in them. Is alcohol evil, then? Yes, it is. However, it does not bring them suffering! Ergo, man needs to change our attitude toward suffering and see that it is not always evil.

St. Augustine’s attitude toward the problem mind-body was not consistently the same. There was a serious turn in his approach to the body. In the beginning, St. Augustine had a negative attitude toward the body. As David Hunter observes, this attitude changed over the years. For instance, St. Augustine at first rejected that Adam and Eve had sexual organs in paradise; later St. Augustine confirmed that they had, and asserted that it is not sexuality that is sinful in human beings but the way in which it can be used. The changes in St. Augustine’s ideas were part of a more general reform of his worldview, as Hunter remarks: “This shift in Augustine’s interpretation of Genesis was accompanied by parallel developments in his thinking on the relation of body and soul and the character of human sin. These new ideas, in turn, affected his treatment of the body and the effects of sin upon it.”¹⁶⁸ St. Augustine understood that sin influenced human sexuality; not that sexuality was brought about by sin itself: “After Augustine had decided that the body and sexuality originally belonged in paradise, it became possible (indeed logical) for him to conceive of sin as affecting human nature both in its bodily and in its sexual aspect.”¹⁶⁹ Before Original sin, Adam and Eve had sexual organs, and probably

¹⁶⁸ David Hunter, “Augustine on the Body,” in *A Companion to Augustine*, ed. by Mark Vessey (Blackwell, 2012), 354.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 354.

had the means for reproduction, St. Augustine asserted, but Original sin changed their attitude toward sexuality and they began to feel shame before God. Had St. Augustine gone in another direction- to claim that sexuality is entirely sinful- he would have been forced to condemn the human body, and to maintain (like the Gnostics) that the soul is imprisoned in the body. Interestingly, Hunter points out that “the year 410 marked a turning point in Augustine’s reflections on the relation of body and soul. Rist has observed that in Letter 137, composed in 411, Augustine introduced the word *persona* to describe the union of the substances of body and soul.”¹⁷⁰ After this turn, the renowned theologian asserted that the body and the soul must be discussed in terms of their union, and not as opposites.

Evil is not rooted in matter as such, as every reader of St. Augustine knows. Hunter remarks that “from his earliest writings on, Augustine had acknowledged that the source of evil was neither matter nor the human body, but rather a movement of the will; that is, sin resulted not from the bodily condition of human beings but from their souls.”¹⁷¹ This is a fundamental difference between St. Augustine’s conception of the soul, and the one of the Manicheans. According to the latter, the soul is entirely innocent; the body had captured it and then it tries to escape. But for St. Augustine the soul has its fault. If one takes free will as a part of the soul (for, it cannot be part of the body), then the soul is responsible for sinning! Sin is rooted in the wrong decisions of the will. Hence, the soul itself is not that innocent. Of course, it is endowed with the capacity to make right choices. St. Augustine rejects any determinism, and some aspects of Manicheanism indicate that determinism is the cornerstone of their doctrine. The Manicheans describe a cosmic struggle which is only observed by human beings, and the latter cannot partake

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 356.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 357.

in it. Is this determinism? It is fatalism, which is a more nefarious and fallacious version of determinism.

Original sin is thus to be understood as the direct result of the wrong decision made by two human beings endowed with free will. It is true that they were tempted into it, but temptation is only a motivating factor; it is not the main cause. After Original sin, the body became corruptible, as St. Augustine is convinced: “For Augustine, original sin had immediate effects on the body, effects caused by the damage done by the first humans to their own wills.”¹⁷² Then the opposition body-soul appeared for the first time: “It was the fractured state of the human person – the conflict between body and soul – that was the real ‘evil’ brought about by sin. In the case of sexuality... the natural instincts even controlled the bodily parts, apart from the consent of the mind or will.”¹⁷³ There was not such an opposition before Original sin.

St. Augustine discusses the problem of the relation body-mind/soul in his two works on the Book of Genesis. There he exposes his theory of the lived experience of Adam and Eve in paradise, as well as his conception of human sexuality and its function prior to Original sin. The latter was the cause of human mortality. St. Augustine asserts as follows: “Also we say that the human body began to waste away and to be fragile and mortal after sin. For they abhor in our body only the mortality which we merited as punishment”.¹⁷⁴ This means that the body itself, as God created it, is not mortal; but it became mortal. This assumption will be very useful for our discussion of the problem, as it will become clear in the next subchapter. The idea of unity is

¹⁷² Ibid., 358.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 359.

¹⁷⁴ St. Augustine, *On Genesis* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1991), 102.

expressed in the following way by the great theologian: “The soul by vivifying the matter of the body forms it into a harmonious unity and does not allow it to fall into dissolution.”¹⁷⁵ The soul is vivifying; there is not any conflict, any struggle between them (ideally). Evidently, the body has its needs and desires, and sometimes they can lead/give-in to temptation. It is completely in the hands of the soul to overcome the temptation. The body thus should not be accused of imposing wrong decisions on the soul; for, the soul should be wise and not succumb. Sin is a mistake of the soul, and not a mistake of the body.

Man was made in God’s image and likeness, as Judaism and Christianity claim. Someone might say that the human body is not beautiful; or that it is too similar to animals’ bodies, St. Augustine observes. But this is not so if one looks at man more carefully: the structure of his body shows the vast difference between man and animals. Man is able to do things with his body which animals cannot, and this proves that he is very different from them. One of the examples is the following: “Perhaps the fact that the human figure is erect for gazing upon heaven carries some weight so that one might believe that the body also was made to the likeness of God.”¹⁷⁶ Man is a much higher being than animals, and this can be seen even in his physical appearance.

Whether St. Augustine’s theory of human sexuality before Original sin is right or wrong, it is clear that his explanation is logically sound. For, if sexuality is seen as having its origin in sin itself, then sexuality must be completely rejected and condemned. This is not the correct view regarding human sexuality, as it can be seen in the Holy Bible Itself. This can be confirmed by reading the works of the major Christian theologians. Sexuality is important for human

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 104.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 186.

reproduction and also as a realization of the true love of a man and a woman. By rejecting completely sexuality, one also has to reject intimate love.

The Earthly Body and the Body in the Hereafter

Summary:

The body and the soul exist in unity, but still it is not clear what is their relation to the human person. Three approaches are possible here: dualism, constitutionism, and animalism. Dualism will be shown to be false by referring to passages from the New Testament. The other two theories still have their drawbacks. The idea that the soul in Hereafter should be embodied corresponds completely to the Christian teaching. But is there any danger of going into the direction of materialism?

Christian theologians themselves are not unanimous regarding the problem of the relation between the soul and the body, between the spiritual and the material substance present in human beings. It is true that radical dualism tempted some of them. It is also true that Christian asceticism emphasizes the importance to overcome bodily desires and all temptations ensuing from them. Still, Christian ascetics never told or wrote that the body has to be mortified and tortured intentionally (unlike their Indian counterparts). What is certain is that for all great theologians the unity of soul and body is indisputable. This is evident also in the Holy Bible.

One of the most famous passages is found in the First Epistle to the Corinthians:

Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? (1 Cor. 6:18-19)

Two things are impressive here: first, the fact that according to St. Paul sexuality is not sinful as a whole, but rather only some of its forms and expressions (“he who sins sexually”). The second is the definition that our body is a “temple of the Holy Spirit.” Man is obliged to keep this temple clean; that is, not to allow temptations to control our will. The reader certainly can see that St. Paul does not speak of any conflict between soul and body. St. Paul preaches that humans must take care of their body, and control it in some way. He does not say that the body itself is sinful, or that the soul is imprisoned in it!

The following passage found in Romans sheds light on the issue. The sins one commits mortify his body; but Christ can resurrect it:

But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you. (Rom. 8:10-11)

Here can be found the source of St. Augustine’s thesis that our body became corruptible due to sin. It is not said that the body is dead from the very beginning; its death is related to sin. What is important here is the stress put on the bodily resurrection: “He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit.” St. Paul refers to the Resurrection of Christ, an act during which Christ appeared in His physical body to the Apostles and other persons. “Then he said to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe’” (John 20:27).

Thomas wants to see Christ in order to believe in His resurrection. The very fact that he can see and touch Christ argues in favor of the thesis of bodily resurrection. St. Paul bases his idea on Christ's words that the same will happen to every righteous believer. Therefore, the human body is not absolutely sinful and/or corruptible. As St. Paul explains in his First Epistle to the Corinthians:

So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. (1 Cor. 15:42-44)

Thus, the great apostle distinguishes between the natural body and the spiritual body. This distinction will be carried out further by Christian theologians. Now it becomes clear why it is so important to prove that the human body is not absolutely corruptible, and that it is possible for it to be resurrected. By claiming that the human body is perishable, and there is not another way here, bodily resurrection will be rejected.

So what, someone might ask- if the bodily resurrection is repudiated, will this have a negative impact on the Christian faith? What if a Christian believes in spiritual resurrection, i.e., without the body being involved in the process? First, this contradicts what is written in the New Testament regarding the resurrection of Christ and His words that every person will become bodily resurrected. Second, the body is the witness (and often the cause) of one's wrongdoing. If it is not resurrected when Jesus Christ commands it to happen, then only the soul will remain, and only it will be judged by God during the Last Judgment. The body is necessary to be present at this Day, then. Third, the idea that one can be resurrected without any participation of one's

body could lead- logically- to the question: Why not then reject also Christ's bodily resurrection? Jesus Christ is of a double nature: divine and human. When one denies Christ's bodily resurrection, this will indicate that His body is entirely human, and only His soul is divine. Then one will encounter another problem: if His body is completely human, how could it then partake in all the miracles performed by Christ? How could it endure the suffering on the cross? There is no doubt that Christ's willpower is stronger than anything one can imagine; Christ is fully human and fully divine!

The fourth reason not to agree with such an understanding is the idea of the beatific vision. In order to have this vision, every righteous person should possess a body, even if it is not the same as what one had on earth. This principle becomes clear when reading the following passage of the Epistle to the Philippians:

But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. (Phil. 3:20-21)

Bodily resurrection is thus one of the most significant and distinguishing elements of the Christian faith. Perhaps not every believer has been aware of this, but it is vital for the Christian reader to realize its truth. Otherwise, there will be the risk of falling into the trap of radical dualism, of Manichean rejection of the unity of body and soul. Jesus Christ will resurrect our earthly, entirely material bodies and they "will be like his glorious body."

Our references to St. Paul should suffice to convince the reader in the veracity of the statement that Christianity teaches that the soul and the body exist in unity, and not in opposition, let alone in a "war." The soul vivifies the body, as St. Augustine says; but the body can be a

good host of the soul, and the connection between them is very tight and interactive. It is wrong to postulate that the body is merely an inert matter (as materialism claims), which exists separately from the soul, or from the spiritual substance.

Now, it is clear that such a unity is available. But what is still the relationship between the soul, the body, and the human person? Is John his own body; or is he his soul? Or is John another, third thing, which is different from his body and his soul? Two Christian conceptions which, however, stand in opposition to each other will be referenced. According to Lynne Rudder Baker¹⁷⁷, all human beings existing in Hereafter are embodied; but their embodiment is only analogous to the earthly embodiment; i.e. their material identity is not the same. On the other hand, the theologians Joshua Mugg and James Turner, Jr. assume that this embodiment is identical: the body one is endowed with in Hereafter is the same as in our earthly life. Both positions share the rejection of substance dualism, or the idea that the soul can exist without any embodiment in the afterlife. It is very disputable which position is true. It should be remarked that substance dualism is not against Christianity and does not reject any of the basic principles of the Christian teaching. The dispute is rather focused on some details. Whether one accepts Baker's theory or Mugg/Turner's theory, their understanding of the immortality of the soul will not suffer any change. The only problem which is concerned by these two conceptions is the following: if one is raised, are they raised in the same bodies they had on earth, or in different bodies? This question is interesting from the standpoint of theological curiosity. It is good still to examine both views and to evaluate their veracity from a Christian point of view. It will be shown that animalism (the theory of Mugg and Turner) could be interpreted as arguing in favor

¹⁷⁷ Lynne Baker, "Need a Christian be a Mind/Body Dualist?" *Faith and Philosophy* 12/4 (1995).

of materialism, hence it is better to adhere either to substance dualism or constitutionism (Baker). Still, as it seems, all three theories (including substance dualism) have their good points.

Substance dualism is rejected by these two theories. Why is it not accepted as a part of the Christian doctrine? The answer is that substance dualism claims that the soul can exist without being embodied. This idea, many contemporary theologians assert, could lead to dangerous extremes, such as radical dualism. It should be clear, though, that the rejection of substance dualism is not atheism. When one philosopher says he/she is not a substance dualist, this does not indicate that he rejects the existence of the soul. It only means that the soul, according to him, should be embodied, and this is logical from a Christian standpoint. Lynne Baker thus offers her explanation of the problem soul/mind-body from the perspective of the so-called by her constitutionism. Baker is convinced that one cannot solve the problem of human identity without referring to the body. As she points out: "A human person is essentially a bodily being."¹⁷⁸ If one rejects this assertion, they will be in trouble: How can someone identify a person without a body? It can be said, for instance, that John does not have a body, and despite of this he is still John. But the face of John, the way he looks is part of our notion of who John is. When one hears the name of their friend John, they always associate the name with his physical appearance. Substance dualism is not able to explain this fact. It merely omits the problem of the personal identity. As Baker describes its main tenet: "Mind/body dualism is the thesis that human persons have non-bodily parts- immaterial souls- that can exist independently of any body."¹⁷⁹ The person is the soul, and the soul is the person. This is the basis of dualism. But a non-dualistic view can explain better human personality and identity. What is more, such a view

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 502.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, 489.

will adhere entirely to Christianity, as Baker remarks: “I shall argue not only that the nondualistic picture is consistent with Christian doctrine, but also that it fits quite comfortably within a Christian outlook.”¹⁸⁰

Substance dualism is still not the only form of dualism. There is also property dualism which speaks not of substances (essences) but of properties. There are physical and mental properties, as it asserts: “According to property dualism, there are two fundamental kinds of properties- mental and physical- that in some way determine all other properties.”¹⁸¹ This presupposes that there is a clear borderline between both kinds of properties, and it is apparent as to which properties are mental. Baker herself does not refer to this weak point of dualism, but the latter is not able to clarify the influence which our psychological condition (let’s say, our will) can have on the body. There are cases in which our positive way of thinking can affect our physical state. There is some sense, therefore, to assume that there is a real continuity between mind and body. Constitutionism and animalism accept such an idea. Dualism thus puts emphasis on a distinction which is not real. One has to turn rather to the distinction between Creator and creation; Baker points out: “Mind/body dualism introduces an unneeded bifurcation into the realm of nature. The real dualism... is not internal to nature at all. It is the dualism between nature and grace, between creation and the Creator, between the natural and the supernatural.”¹⁸² As Baker maintains, Scripture offers a non-dualistic view regarding the relation between soul/mind-body. This can be found in all passages concerning the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Baker points out that “if mind/body dualism were Scriptural, I would expect the doctrine

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 489-490.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 491.

¹⁸² Ibid., 501.

to be suggested in accounts of the resurrection of Christ. But the resurrection appearances of Christ are all bodily.”¹⁸³ The authority of the Holy Bible is important when analyzing the aforementioned problem, and it says the following: dualism is not the right solution.

What is a human person, then? Baker defines the human person in the following way: “A person is a being with a capacity for certain intentional states like believing, desiring, intending, including first-person intentional states.”¹⁸⁴ That is, I will use the pronoun “I” when referring to my actions. A person will know this intuitively. Baker adds that a human person is mainly defined in biological terms, at least when referring to our earthly existence: “A human person is (at least for part of its existence) a biological entity- a member of the species homo sapiens- with a capacity for first-person intentional states.”¹⁸⁵ Still, this does not lead automatically to the conclusion that the human person is always connected with the body, and that all of our intentional states concern our body: “I am not claiming that all of human person’s first-person intentional states make reference to a body.”¹⁸⁶ These cases do not have anything to do with the condition of our body. The truth is, according to Lynne Baker, that everyone has a body, but people are not the same, they have different identities; which means, I, as a person, am not constituted by my body. My body is only a “companion”; it is needed to be here, to be part of my personality. Still, my identity is not the same as my body. Given the person Mrs. Smith as an example, Baker observes the following: “Many of the properties that make Smith the person she

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 491.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 492.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

is depend on her being embedded in a linguistic, social and physical environment. So, the relation between Smith and her body is not one of identity.”¹⁸⁷

Furthermore, Baker argues in favor of the theory that our body in Hereafter will be different from our earthly body. However, according to another conception, both are identical, with the only difference being that the other body is raised. This theory is called animalism by its proponents. As Joshua Mugg and James Turner, Jr. assert: “If there is an afterlife of the sort envisioned by Christianity, an afterlife that requires eschatological bodily resurrection, then constitutionism and substance dualism fail to explain why God would resurrect bodies.”¹⁸⁸ And this is a serious drawback, eliminated by accepting the theory of animalism which “naturally explains why God would resurrect bodies- they are necessary for the existence of the human person.”¹⁸⁹ The latter statement is very important: it shows that human identity must have some embodiment; that this identity cannot be attributed to the soul alone, to the soul seen as a completely isolated entity. For example, dualism does not address the problem of resurrection properly. As Mugg and Turner point out: “In particular, dualism does not have a ready answer for why God will resurrect the numerically identical body. The dualist can explain this data only by making additional commitments to her overall theory.”¹⁹⁰ A dualist will say that the resurrection takes place due to God’s involvement and decision; that one does not need to search for any logic in this occurrence. It can also be said that all the words regarding resurrection are of a metaphorical essence, so one should not take them literally. Mugg and Turner cannot accept

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 494.

¹⁸⁸ Joshua Mugg and James Turner, “Why a *Bodily* Resurrection?: The Bodily Resurrection and the Mind/Body Relation,” *Journal of Analytic Theology* 5 (2017), sect. 1, accessed 1 August 2018, <http://journalofanalytictheology.com/jat/index.php/jat/article/view/153/357>

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., sect. 3.2.

such arguments: their interpretation of the biblical passages concerning human resurrection make them convinced that only animalism can clarify the question of the resurrection of all human beings logically.

Both theologians also address Lynne Baker's constitutionism. She repudiates that the embodiment in Hereafter is absolutely identical with our earthly existence. Therefore, as both authors claim, one can find "three theological implications of Baker's rejection of Identical Embodiment, which many Christians would find problematic: God will not redeem, rescue, or save humanity as a kind; Baker's account cannot uphold Chalcedonian Christology; and Baker's account courts reincarnation."¹⁹¹ Of course, this is the opinion of Mugg and Turner; constitutionism has some flaws, but it cannot be accused of defending of reincarnation. Baker herself speaks of our existence in Hereafter; therefore there could not be any mention of reincarnation here (for, reincarnation mean that a given soul is embodied again and again on earth, or in this world). The theory of animalism, on the other hand, asserts the following: "If each human person is identical to his or her body, then it is not possible that a human person should exist without his or her body... Animalism explains why it is that God will resurrect the very body that died: doing so is necessary for that person to exist at all."¹⁹² A human being cannot exist without a body- this is the main thesis of Mugg and Turner. Furthermore, animalism, according to both authors, is the only form of defense of the doctrine of the resurrection from materialism: "The literature that advances resurrection problems against views

¹⁹¹ Ibid., sect. 3.1.

¹⁹² Ibid., sect. 3.3.

consistent with animalism do so against views that are, in our opinion, materialist/physicalist views.”¹⁹³

However, things are not that simple. Animalism still has some flaws to overcome. By saying that every person is embodied, this still does not indicate anything about the entity named “soul.” Can the term “soul” be replaced with the term “person”? Is there any difference between them? This is a practical question which is easy to be answered: both terms signify different entities. The term “person” has not always been employed by philosophers and theologians; it was introduced in the Middle Ages. One of the first philosophers to analyze it was Saint Augustine. Still, the great theologian wrote in terms of the soul and the self. The very concept of a “person” did not exist then. This term was elaborated during the Church Councils which discussed the nature of Jesus Christ and the relations within the Holy Trinity (in the 3rd, 4th, and 5th centuries AD). It was important for the theologians at that time to define the Holy Trinity as Three Persons existing in unity, sharing one nature. But as regards of anthropology, the term “person” was employed later, in the works of St. Thomas Aquinas. The contemporary meaning of the term has new dimensions that did not exist in the Middle Ages- legal, psychological, ethical, etc. Theologians preferred writing about “self” because this word was enough to describe the fact that a given individual is different from all other human beings. The concept of “self” sufficed to show his uniqueness. Nonetheless, today the terms “self” and “person” have different meanings. “Self” refers rather to the individual existence of a given human being; it contrasts him to all the rest (there is “self” and “not-self”, Ego and non-Ego). The term “person,” on the other hand, does not necessarily lead to contrast or opposition. Every human being is one person,

¹⁹³ Ibid.

it is said. The question now is: whether one can accept the view that one's organism coincides with one's personhood?

It is easy for theologians to fall into temptation here. In his attempt to overcome radical dualism, the theologian in question will identify the organism with the person, with the identity. And here is where real danger is hidden: if the organism is identical with the person, then why not claim that the organism is enough to describe the person? It is not necessary to refer to one's mental characteristics. It is enough to speak in terms of one's body, and that's all. This way leads to materialism, and such an approach does more harm than good.

Animalism puts too strong an emphasis on the body. My body is not my person; it is not me. It is part of me; it is important to me. But still a person cannot reduce themselves only to a body, to its experiences, needs, actions, movements, and so forth. If a man says that he is his body, then the next step seems logical: his thought is his brain. Therefore, his soul is his body; or, more clearly stated, his body determines his soul. This is a dangerous train of thought: the more emphasis that is put on the body when defining the human person, the bigger is the possibility to define the latter in materialistic terms. Mugg and Turner, evidently, have good intentions; all that they want is to make clear what happens with our earthly body in Hereafter. Their thesis is logical: one should have the same body on earth as well as in the afterlife. But what they are not aware of, is the fact that Scripture should not be interpreted literally all the time. When referring to our heavenly bodies, the given passages in the New Testament do not speak about the same, exact (unglorified) material bodies that one has on earth. This is simply impossible: it would mean that matter is eternal and it can be present even in Hereafter. What an absurdity!

Therefore, animalism as an account of the relation mind/soul-body is not quite satisfying or cogently exhaustive. It is a result of a literal interpretation of Scripture. Still, there is no passage in which it is asserted that our body in Hereafter will be identical with our earthly body! Mugg and Turner are seemingly not atheists; nor do they reject Christianity. Their point of view still can provoke hesitation in the Christian believer. What is true here is the fact that they try to define the problem of the relation mind/soul-body in terms of Scripture.

Baker's constitutionism has fewer flaws. It only asserts that a human person should be embodied, therefore in Hereafter man will be embodied too. What our body will be like, is ambiguous. What is certain is the fact that the human body became corruptible with Original sin. Hence, it is possible to imagine a body which is not corruptible. However, according to science such a state of affairs does not correspond to reality: all material bodies are corruptible, scientists claim. Therefore, there should be another factor here which is omitted by the two sides in this discussion. What is ignored are two things: (1) God, and (2) the spirit. This topic will be analyzed in the following chapter.

Conclusion

Although the three versions of materialism have been repudiated by us earlier, this did not make the situation entirely clear. The recognition of the soul as being independent and separately existing leads to the question whether the soul needs to be embodied in a body at all. According to the long tradition dating back to Plato (dualism), the spiritual substance needs a body only in this world. This idea was taken by the Neoplatonists, and especially the Gnostics. The latter proposed the doctrine which will be called here radical dualism, or the conception of the absolute separation of the two substances, an idea based on their dualistic ontology, the

eternal struggle between good and evil. Such an understanding is harmful to the Christian teaching, and for that reason. By referring to St. Augustine and some biblical passages, the falsity of radical dualism was demonstrated. Its peak was the doctrine of Manicheanism which claimed that the soul is imprisoned in the body and that everything material is evil. Christianity cannot accept such an account of the world because Christianity takes it for granted that God is good. Therefore His creation is good as well. It is not possible for the world to be created by an evil God. Hence, man has to look for the root of evil in our soul, in our will; which fact, of course, does not exclude the harmful influence of external factors (still, evil exists objectively, it is not an illusion).

St. Augustine's conception of the relation between soul/mind-body is very balanced. It shows that it is necessary for the soul to take care of the body instead of ignoring it, and even torturing it. The body should be the temple of the soul, and not its prison. Both exist in unity, which still does not indicate that the soul has to be subordinated to the body. The body is the lower part of the human person, and it should be commanded by the soul. But the needs of the body have to be satisfied whenever the wise soul thinks it is necessary to do so.

Speaking about the soul and the body, one cannot dismiss the identity issue. What does our identity consist of? Is the soul the only "carrier" of our identity? Is the body absolutely necessary to be certain that our identity is really ours? Will our identity continue its existence in Hereafter? What happens with it in the moment of death? This is a problem which constitutionism and animalism are not able to elucidate. This is due to the conviction that a human person and a human being are the same. Here, in this world, this is absolutely true. But from the theological standpoint Hereafter cannot contain material things, because all man knows

that it is rather of immaterial essence. The things there could be similar to earthly material things, and still not be material. A piece of the puzzle is missing.

Man as a Spiritual Being (Christian Theistic Perspective)

Man is a unity of body and soul. This conception can be challenged by opposing these two parts. Still, Christianity does not accept such an opposition and contrast, and instead of this, it offers the theory that the soul is of a higher nature than the body, yet the soul should be wise and not feel contempt for the body. The soul is the form of the body; therefore, the body will do whatever the soul enables it to do as its principle of activation.

This analysis still does not suffice to define man's nature. There is another term which is often employed, and which is found at many places in Scripture- spirit. This is one of the most significant words in Christian theology; priests and preachers frequently mention it; it is found in many theological and philosophical books. The present chapter will try to conclude our analysis of human nature by defining the role, function, and importance of what man calls spirit. Two points of view will be presented- that the spirit is one of the three parts of man (tripartism); and that spirit is the source of the soul, i.e., it is the very substance of the soul and not a separate element of man (bipartism).

The Spirit as an Independent Part of Man

Summary:

The tripartite theory of human nature asserts that the spirit exists separately from the soul. Two authors adhering to this theory (Watchman Nee and John Heard) will be discussed in the present subchapter. Their arguments will be exposed and finally repudiated.

Two main views discuss the problem of the nature of spirit: the tripartite view against the bipartite view. To present the first point of view properly, several meanings of the term spirit will be listed:

1. The Holy Spirit, or the Third Person of the Most August and Holy Trinity.
2. God is often called spirit.
3. Spirit is also used to signify a universal consciousness/mind, as in Hegel (Absolute Spirit).
4. Concerning man, spirit is often used as a synonym of soul (but not only, as will be demonstrated).

It is evident that the word “spirit” has many meanings and connotations. It can be employed as regards of God; it can be used when describing human nature. This word is used so frequently in the Holy Bible, and especially in the Epistles of St. Paul, that some theologians and philosophers claim that man needs to perceive the spiritual part of human nature as completely independent from the soul, and as even dominating over the soul. They refer particularly to the following passage:

May God himself, the God of peace,
sanctify you through and through. May
your whole spirit, soul and body be kept
blameless at the coming of our Lord
Jesus Christ (1 Thess. 5:23).

Why should St. Paul divide human nature into three parts, if the spirit is not separated? It is quite interesting that St. Paul uses the word “spirit” so often. This will be shown and analyzed in the next subchapter. Based on the hypothesis that the spirit exists completely independently in man, philosophers such as Watchman Nee assert that this part really exists, and that man does

not need to see it as identical with the soul. Nee, a Chinese Christian converted in the 1920s and then persecuted by the Communists there, elaborated the theory that the spirit stands higher than the soul, and that what man calls soul is essentially the self. Nee saw a real confrontation between both, and claimed that it is important for the spirit to take over the soul, to control the latter. Otherwise, the given person will remain “soulish,” i.e., unspiritual. As he writes in his book *The Spiritual Man*: “That the body is man’s outward sheath is undoubtedly correct, but the Bible never confuses spirit and soul as though they are the same. Not only are they different in terms; their very natures differ from each other.”¹⁹⁴ This is a solid thesis which seems striking for the Christian believer. Why should there be a such a distinction, spirit from the soul? Is such a distinction practical? Does it have any practical consequences? Nee is convinced that there are such effects: “It is an issue of supreme importance for it affects tremendously the spiritual life of a believer. How can a believer understand spiritual life if he does not know what is the extent of the realm of the spirit? Without such understanding how can he grow spiritually?”¹⁹⁵ Nee had dedicated his fundamental work to the proper distinction between spirit and soul. According to him, if a Christian believer is not familiar with the distinction, there is a serious risk for him/her not to be aware of the importance of the Holy Spirit.

The soul is identical with the self, Nee observes. Everything which is centered on the self is actually a matter of the soul. However, as he comprehends the issue, the soul is a medium between the body and the spirit. As the Chinese author writes: “The soul is the site of personality. The will, intellect and emotions of man are there... The soul stands between and exercises its power to discern and decide whether the spiritual or the natural world should

¹⁹⁴ Watchman Nee, *The Spiritual Man* (New York: Christian Fellowship Publishers, 1977), 25.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

reign.”¹⁹⁶ This clearly shows that, according to Watchman Nee, the soul exists separately from the spirit. This idea is quite controversial. The soul is a medium: “The soul stands between these two worlds, yet belongs to both. It is linked with the spiritual world through the spirit and with the material world through the body.”¹⁹⁷ The soul is somehow dependent on the body, and could be controlled by the lower instincts of the latter; and still, it can reach out to the sphere of the spirit. The reader will be more certain in his/her reception of the term “soul” if the latter is replaced with “self”, or with “person.” The soul is also mind, emotions, will, as Nee remarks: “It also possesses the power of free will, hence is able to choose from among its environments. The spirit cannot act directly upon the body. It needs a medium, and that medium is the soul produced by the touching of the spirit with the body.”¹⁹⁸ That is, the spirit stands too far from the body, from the material world. It cannot be connected directly to the body. This is the reason for the existence of the soul, the medium which is able to control the body by following the wisdom of the spirit. Furthermore, in this material world man is centered on his own needs, interests, desires, and so forth. This is the realm of the soul; it comprises the field of one’s Ego, of himself. Without the soul, the ego would not have existed at all. The Chinese author continues: “Inasmuch as we have seen how soul is the site of our personality, the organ of volition and the natural life, we can easily conclude that this soul is also the ‘real I’ - I myself. Our self is the soul.”¹⁹⁹ In short, the spirit cannot be individual; it cannot be embodied. The spirit is universal, without any limitations. It is not here and not there. The soul, on the contrary, is connected with the body, although the soul is not located exactly in the body (for, the soul is immaterial, so it

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 31.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 30.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 44.

cannot be located anywhere). When the body feels pain, the soul feels it too; but the spirit cannot feel such pain (at least not pain caused by material causes). The spirit is thus the highest part of human nature; the soul is the medium, connecting it with the body; and the body is the lowest part. This is the tripartite theory of human nature.

Another important idea developed by Nee is the assumption that the soul is what one is born with, and the spirit comes later. In his opinion, man's "second birth," or the moment when the Holy Spirit comes to him, is of a spiritual nature, and the soul is not involved in it. As Nee asserts: "Soul life is the life a man inherits at birth. All that this life possesses and all that it may become are in the realm of the soul."²⁰⁰ The soul is the mind, emotions, and feelings, and will; man is endowed with a certain capacity of mind, with a certain character, with a given temperament. The spirit is still not developed when man is a small child. Man is not able to comprehend the essence of the Holy Spirit then. It is a serious mistake to remain in the realm of the soul, i.e., in the so-called mental sphere and the sphere of our Ego. Man has to understand that his soul is not the spirit itself; only then will he be able to be reborn. As Nee puts it: "Before the believer is born again his spirit becomes so sunken and surrounded by his soul that it is impossible for him to distinguish whether something is emanating from the soul or from the spirit. The functions of the latter have become mixed up with those of the former."²⁰¹ Nee adds that "the spirit has lost its primary function- towards God; for it is dead to God."²⁰² This is the case when one is not able to realize that his soul represents only his ego, and not the spirit; and that the way of the ego is far from the way of the spirit. The spirit in such a situation is "dead"- it

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 46.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 38.

²⁰² Ibid.

does not function properly. Nee, therefore, rejects any spiritual function of the soul; the latter cannot deal by itself with spiritual matters. Thus, one's soul and spirit can become mixed, and one will not be able to distinguish between them. This is the "mixed state" mentioned by Nee; the spirit is present in one soul, but it is still restricted in some way. If the spirit is not able (or is prevented to) communicate with God, then it does not function in the way it should. As the Chinese philosopher tells us: "The spirit is that part by which we commune with God and by which alone we are able to apprehend and worship Him. Because it tells us of our relationship with God, the spirit is called the element of God-consciousness. God dwells in the spirit."²⁰³ The soul is the self, hence the soul alone cannot communicate with God. The soul cannot go beyond its own limitations, thus it needs the help of the spirit. The spirit is attracted to and by God as similar and contingent things attract each other. God is spirit, and human spirit aspires toward Him. Human spirit originates in God alone, and nowhere else: "Our spirit comes directly from God for it is God-given (Num. 16:22). Our soul is not so directly derived; it was produced after the spirit entered the body. It is therefore characteristically related to the created being. It is the created life, the natural life."²⁰⁴ The soul is restricted in the sense that it is connected with the body; it is forced to be with the body, to attend to the body's needs, desires, etc. The spirit is completely free; it does not have to answer to any bodily need, it does not need even to stay in touch with the material world. All it needs is to be with God, to rejoice in God's grace and to love God. For that reason, the soul must follow the instructions of the spirit. If it is controlled by bodily instincts and needs, then the soul will find itself as standing very far away from God: "If the spirit rules, the soul will be directed by the spirit to exercise its volition to decide or to do on

²⁰³ Ibid., 29.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 49.

behalf of the spirit's desire; if however sin reigns in the body, the soul will be enticed by sin into using its volition to decide or to do what sin desires."²⁰⁵

The soul controlled by the spirit is not in distress. The very fact that it goes beyond itself through the power of the spirit means that one cannot feel pain and suffering or worry anymore. As the Chinese Christian observes: "The soul which comes under the Holy Spirit's authority is a restful one. Once we busily planned, today we calmly trust the Lord... Once we entertained many thoughts and ambitions, today we consider God's will best and rest ourselves in Him."²⁰⁶ The soul is our self; it comprises all our thoughts, feelings, emotions. The ability to think belongs entirely to the soul. The soul, therefore, can be worried, can be afraid, can be in despair, and so forth. This results from its nature: to attend to the needs of the body and to do anything which is needed to prolong the existence of the organism it is connected with.

The spirit, in turn, has its functions and capacities. Nee writes the following: "According to the teaching of the Bible and the experience of believers, the human spirit can be said to comprise three parts; or, to put it another way, one can say it has three main functions. These are conscience, intuition and communion."²⁰⁷ These parts, or functions, are not present in the soul. It is quite interesting that Nee associates human conscience with the realm of the spirit. This means that according to him, morality belongs to (and is protected by) the spirit, and not to the soul. Communion is the ability to communicate with God, and intuition is the way to know God in a non-rational way. Communion is based on intuition, as Nee remarks: "A believer must recognize that the Holy Spirit alone comprehends the things of God- and that intuitively. He is the one

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 144-5.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 219.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 35.

Person Who can convey this knowledge to man. But for anyone to obtain such knowledge he must appropriate it through the proper means.”²⁰⁸ The latter is performed through intuition or the knowledge which the Holy Spirits gives to man. The author adds the following: “The conjunction of these two intuitions enables man to apprehend the mind of God.”²⁰⁹

But what if a given person is convinced that his/her soul is the only way to communicate with God? What if a Christian thinks that he can communicate with God through his intellect, like a person with another person? This state is not far from what is usually called “soulish.” Soulish means unspiritual. According to Nee, there are two types of “soulish” states: when one is a Christian; and when one is an atheist. The soulish person pays heed to the needs of his/her body, is controlled by his/her desires. This word is often employed to signify a person that is not spiritual, that has a materialist attitude. Interestingly enough, Nee believes that some Christians can be soulish, which means that they are not aware of their real atheism. They only deceive themselves that they are believers; but they are not Christians in spirit. They claim they follow the principles of Christianity; but this is only a formal assertion. They do not understand what Christianity is; or rather, they understand it only with their minds, not with their hearts. A “soulish” person can even have some religious experiences, as Nee observes: “Soulish ones do enjoy some spiritual experiences. Those however are rather mixed, with the soulical mingling with the spiritual. These believers are acquainted with the outline of a spiritual walk because the Holy Spirit has led them so to do.”²¹⁰ Thus, religious experiences themselves do not prove that man really communicates with God, that the Holy Spirit is present within him. The role of the

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 314.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 161.

spirit in such a case is not the main one, and it suffers from some restrictions imposed on it by the soul (by the intellect, for instance): “While they may be spiritual in knowledge, in point of fact they are soulish. The Holy Spirit genuinely dwells in their spirit and has accorded them the experience of conquering sin through the operation of the cross. But He is not allowed to lead their lives.”²¹¹

The Christian that is soulish is not able to get rid of himself, of his ego. He is still centered on his own needs and desires, although he is not a hedonist. As the Chinese philosopher remarks: “When a Christian is said to be soulish he is walking according to self. Everything originates from himself. He is governed not by the voice of the Holy Spirit in the inner man but rather by the thoughts, decisions and desires of his outer man.”²¹² Such a person stands in-between the Holy Spirit and his own ego. Still, he is too confident in himself; he knows that he has approached God and maybe even has communicated with God (which is an illusion). The very fact that he thinks he is a Christian does not change anything; this state is even worse than being an atheist. For, the atheist could understand his situation more easily. The Christian that is a Christian only because he attends church service, or because he knows Scripture by heart, will never understand the difference between his soulish state and the state when one communicates with the Holy Spirit. Such a person lacks meekness. And a Christian should obligatorily be meek: he needs to go beyond his ego, beyond his pride. As Watchman Nee claims: “Christians who thrive on the soul life are very proud. This is because they make self the center. However

²¹¹ Ibid., 161.

²¹² Ibid., 162.

much they may try to give the glory to God and acknowledge any merit as of God's grace, carnal believers have their mind set upon self."²¹³

Not that the Christian "soulsh" persons should be compared to the "carnal" persons (hedonists). The carnal person is completely controlled by his bodily instincts and desires. There is no way for him even to think about God. God is a far-distant object for him; even if God exists, he thinks, this does not change anything in our earthly existence. The carnal person is soulsh as well; there is no significant difference between these two concepts. Still, the Christian can be either soulsh or spiritual. This is the striking discovery of Watchman Nee: that the fact mankind conceives themselves as being Christians, and even the fact that the others recognize them as Christians, does not make them such. Christianity is in the spirit, and when the spirit is not present within them, this state is to be seen as standing far from real Christianity. Both the soulsh person and the "soulsh" Christian, who is more soulsh than a real believer, have to go beyond their self, beyond their self-centeredness: "Unless one is disposed to deny his soul life and permit his spirit life to grasp the reins, the latter has little chance to develop."²¹⁴

One can realize that he is soulsh; and still, this is not enough. There should be some action taken by him. Many people try to attain to God by searching for the truth. They are convinced that the truth will help them communicate with God. This is the danger of intellectualism. Our intellect is nothing but a part of our ego. By following our intellect all the time, man will not attain to God. No Christian theologian has claimed that God is attainable only by employing our intellect, our ability to rationalize, to conceptualize. The Chinese author

²¹³ Ibid., 170.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 160.

remarks as follows: “The most prominent indication of being soulish is a mental search, acceptance and propagation of the truth. For Christians of this type the highest spiritual experience and the profoundest truth serve but to cultivate their minds”²¹⁵ This person will have religious experiences; but all he will do is to conceptualize it. He will try to elaborate a philosophical system elucidating these experiences. This is the mistake of many believers: instead of submitting themselves to the Holy Spirit, they tend to conceptualize what they experience, and then disseminate the rational knowledge they have gained. Man has to use both his intellect and heart when trying to attain to God. However, to rely only on his intellect, on his rational knowledge, is quite wrong. In the previous chapter, the problem of the rationalization of Christianity was discussed in short. Every attempt to subject Christianity to rational analysis will miss out on its essence: the spirit. The spirit can only be experienced, not described and not conceptualized.

This has been a short outline of Watchman Nee’s theory of the division of soul and spirit; of the difference between both parts of man. His tripartite theory is a radical one: it opposes soul to spirit. This can be seen in the following passage: “This war between the soul and the spirit is waged secretly but interminably within God’s children. The soul seeks to retain its authority and move independently, while the spirit strives to possess and master everything for the maintenance of God’s authority”²¹⁶

The word “war” may seem shocking. Of course, Nee does not intend to say that the spirit must fight with the soul. But according to the passage quoted above there is some tension between them, and if the spirit does not control the soul, the latter will become subordinated to

²¹⁵ Ibid., 179.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 208.

the body, i.e., the particular person will become “soulish.” The truth is that there is no war between both; there is not even a struggle. The soul is of spiritual nature; so how can they fight against each other?

A similar theory was exposed by the philosopher John B. Heard in the 1870s. It should be clear that Heard was not a professional theologian; he presented his ideas from a philosophical point of view. Slightly influenced by the Evangelist movement in the United States, the British thinker expressed the same opinion as Nee: that human nature is tripartite, and that all three parts exist separately and independently. The traditional dualism of body and soul does not work, Heard asserted; then man needs to involve another element here, spirit. In his book, *The Tripartite Nature of Man*, Heard claims that this theory was meant by St. Paul, although not completely elaborated by him. In the Holy Bible, Heard assumes, the tripartite theory of human nature is not present. The reason for this is that, according to the British thinker, the revelation of God is not given at once. He is an adherent to the so-called gradual revelation theory, or the idea that the Revelation of God is realized throughout the centuries. Ergo, man can see the Holy Bible from a new perspective and base our assumptions on this theory. Now, the tripartite theory of man is subjected to gradual revelation. With the course of time, theologians understand clearly that the traditional dualist approach is wrong. As Heard puts it: “The contrast between the psychical and the pneumatical man, and between the state of the Pnuma before and after conversion, is not taught by our Lord: it was one of that class of truths which they could not bear as yet. We need a spiritual mind to discover our own spirits to ourselves.”²¹⁷ Therefore, man has to interpret the Bible by themselves; and man has the right to do so, according to Heard. This is an important prerequisite of Heard’s theory.

²¹⁷ John B. Heard, *Tripartite Nature of Man* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1875), 70.

The dualist approach is rooted in the interpretations of the Latin Church Fathers who, in Heard's opinion, made a serious mistake: they did not distinguish between soul and spirit. Therefore, he points out the following: "Divines, in general, if they assign any meaning at all to the Pneuma, describe it as a kind of sub-division of the Psyche... If the Pneuma is only a class under the Psyche, not an original part by itself, we do not wonder that practical men should pass the subject by as a needless refinement."²¹⁸ This is due (1) to the Greek understanding of the soul as having three different parts (intellectual, emotional, instincts/passions); and (2) to the Scripture itself which does not expose the tripartite theory of man. In the Old Testament such a theory is absent; in the New Testament, it appears mainly in the Epistles of St. Paul. But the term "spirit" is of primary importance to us, especially when referring to Christian ethics. It is clear that the terms "spirit" and "spiritual" are an essential part of the moral doctrine of St. Paul and the Fathers following him.

Furthermore, Heard claims that the dualist approach does not function properly. Ancient Greeks did not have a true concept of spirit and spirituality; for them, the highest part of the soul was the intellect. What to do then with the spirit? Man cannot subject it to the intellect; for then the true faith will cease to exist. Another problem is how to understand St. Paul's doctrine exposed in the Epistles if one ignores the term "spirit"? If the spirit is part of the soul, why is it referred to so often? As Heard writes, "these are some of the difficulties of belief of which the prevailing division of man into body and soul offers no solution, but which at once explain themselves on the other theory of the trichotomy."²¹⁹

²¹⁸ Ibid., 8.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 9.

The Old Testament does not express any concept or any definition of spirit. According to Heard, Ancient Jews opposed two different terms to each other: Nephesh and Ruach. The former signifies the very fact that a given body is animated, so it is animation. Ruach describes the higher part of human nature: the soul. Still, both terms refer to a notion which one could call “soul.” In short, there is a lower and a higher part of the soul. Ancient Greeks took the same scheme, and they contrasted the soul to the body. In both cases, there was not a middle option. As Heard explains it: “The contrast that we express between soul and body, they expressed by spirit and soul. Ruach and Nephesh had each a lower meaning that we now attach to them, Ruach referring to what we should now call the soul, and Nephesh to what we should now call the body.”²²⁰ It is the time now to distinguish three separate elements: “Man is the integer of two, or rather three, factors or fractions- the mysterious unity of sense-consciousness, which we call the body; self-consciousness, which we call the soul or reason; and God-consciousness, which we call the spirit.”²²¹ This is a trinity which is created an image of God, of the Holy Trinity, as Heard asserts. The very fact of the presence of the spirit in man cannot be rejected. Furthermore, and very importantly, these three parts are interconnected. In contrast with Watchman Nee, Heard claims that the tripartite nature of man is actually indivisible: “This trinity in unity, moreover, is as indivisible in man as in God. There can be no soulless spirit, no spiritless soul. As in theology, such as the Father is, such is the Son, so in psychology. The will is immanent in thought, and thought emanent from the will.”²²² Whereas Nee claims that the spirit can get rid of the body and the soul, Heard asserts that such a separation is not conceivable. Here Heard offers

²²⁰ Ibid., 68.

²²¹ Ibid., 124.

²²² Ibid., 139.

a thesis which is very controversial from the Christian standpoint. If the spirit loses its connection with the soul, the former will go directly to God, he maintains: "Soul... without spirit or body would pass into the universal soul or reason, if we may personify a mere abstraction; and spirit again, being 'the likest God within the soul,' would, when the tie of life is broken, return to God that gave it, in the sense that it would be reabsorbed in the Deity."²²³ This assumption indicates that one's soul does not survive death; what survives it is one's spirit! Our soul is not immortal, then. The following passage will make the reader even more confused: "So pneuma may not be able to maintain a separate existence when divided from the psyche. Without the personal soul with which the individuality is bound up, it might merge its existence into the ocean of universal Spirit, as the Buddhists think of Nirwana."²²⁴

The latter statement is completely anti-Christian. Christians cannot believe in anything of this kind. To claim that one's soul is not immortal, and only the spirit is, is very worrying; for, this practically rejects individual immortality, one of the basic principles of the Christian doctrine. For Hinduists, Buddhists, Taoists, and so forth, such an idea will not be problematic. In all cases, this interpretation of the relations between spirit and soul is wrong. As Heard claims: "With the gift of the divine Pneuma, the existence of a third or pneumatical part in man became as distinct as it was before obscure. The dying Stephen commends not his soul, or the rational and moral life, in God; but the spirit, the divine and regenerate nature quickened by the Holy Ghost."²²⁵

²²³ Ibid., 115.

²²⁴ Ibid., 77.

²²⁵ Ibid., 73.

The latter passage clarifies something important. Heard does not mean that our soul is not immortal absolutely; what he means is that what is called “soul” is our spirit. Now, the confusion disappears. Our immortality is only our spirit, and the soul comprises our intellect and emotions. Is our intellect immortal? Of course, it is not. Hence, a clearer definition of the soul is needed. It is found in the following passage: “The psyche is the life of man in its widest and most inclusive sense, embracing not only the animal, but also the intellectual and moral faculties.”²²⁶ The soul is life; and life is associated with the soul. But the human soul also comprises his intellectual capacity. The soul is life, therefore it is created, and the spirit is not created. Like Nee, Heard claims that the spirit originates from God: “As God is spirit, so the spirit in man is that which, in an eminent and peculiar sense, comes from God. God... is the Creator ex traduce of the animal and intellectual part of every man naturally born into the world. Not so with the spirit, it comes from God, and is of God.”²²⁷

How can one be sure that they are true Christians, and not merely Christians of the “soulish” type (Nee)? The British thinker postulates, “Where there is little sense of God’s presence, there the Pneuma is scarcely, if at all, developed. The child and the savage cannot rise to a higher conception of God than as a great being who dwells in a palace above in the skies.”²²⁸ Hence, the child cannot be really spiritual; the same is valid of the “savages.” With this statement Heard wants to demonstrate that Christianity is the highest development of human civilization, and that the culmination of our civilization is spirituality. Still, the spirit is present in every human being; but it is not manifested often. Likewise, Nee, Heard believes that the spirit is

²²⁶ Ibid., 90.

²²⁷ Ibid., 103.

²²⁸ Ibid., 111.

controlled by the soul, hence it is not possible for the spirit to realize its potentiality. The second birth, or the spiritual birth (a prevalent concept among Evangelicals) does not signify the appearance of the spirit; it only means that the spirit is awakened. As Heard maintains: “When we speak of the new birth, we do not mean that the human pneuma begins to exist then for the first time... But we mean that the pneuma in man is now quickened and acted upon by the divine pneuma- the third person of the Blessed Trinity.”²²⁹

The second birth is an important concept in Heard’s theory. It marks the borderline between the true Christian and the Christian that only perceives himself as such (but he is not a real one). One is not born Christian; one becomes Christian, this statement indicates. In such a way, Heard rejects the ceremonialism of the Christian religion. Only the internal form of faith is essential, and all external (sacramental) appearances are not important, he is convinced. He does not mention that a true believer should also know the central dogmas of the Christian doctrine, otherwise one could easily become a heretic. The complete rejection of the so-called formal sides of the religion is typical of the Evangelical denominations. Likewise, Heard believes that everyone should search for the presence of God in his life, and then he will have the chance for rebirth. Of course, the rebirth cannot take place according to one’s plans and intentions; no one knows when and how the spirit will awake within him. At any rate, this will happen to some of the believers. The soul will become controlled by the spirit then. The pneumatical man will be awakened: “When the new or pneumatical nature begins to stir under the old or psychical nature, it asserts its rights, and claims our whole being, spirit, soul and body as the temple of the living God.”²³⁰ The power of the spirit can govern the body as well. It will advise the soul how to

²²⁹ Ibid., 199.

²³⁰ Ibid., 211.

manage with its emotions and passions; how to avoid temptations; how to adhere to the Christian morality. Furthermore, one is being sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and this can be seen easily: “The advance of sanctification is marked by a growth of the pneuma. It begins to assert its supremacy, and to compel the psychical and animal parts of their nature to know their place, and own their subjection to it as the governor supreme under God.”²³¹

With all this said, the idea that spirit and soul differ significantly from each other becomes very convincing. Watchman Nee and John Heard have been discussed here only as two of the proponents of the tripartite theory. Their arguments are well-elaborated and logically formulated. It is time to evaluate critically the ideas exposed in the present subchapter. In the following pages of this work, we will expose the Christian doctrine of the bipartite nature of man. Here some counter-arguments to Nee’s and Heard’s theories will be presented.

Thesis 1: There is a significant difference between spirit and soul.

Repudiation: No one rejects the fact that the soul has a spiritual nature. Even the proponents of the tripartite theory of man do not claim that the soul is deprived of any spirituality. If the soul did not have spiritual nature, then it would have been unspiritual, i.e. material. The soul cannot be material!

Thesis 2: The spirit is universal and immortal; the soul is individual, therefore mortal.

Repudiation: This idea completely rejects the Christian doctrine of immortality. According to Christianity, the individual soul goes either to heaven or to hell. There is no way to exist in Hereafter in an indefinite state of “merging with the Absolute,” as Hinduists and Taoists believe. Every soul will be judged and then rewarded or punished.

Thesis 3: The spirit is supraindividual; the soul is individual.

²³¹ Ibid., 219.

Repudiation: It can be said that only God is supraindividual. All existing beings have individual form. There is no human being in the world which is not individual. Furthermore, if the spirit is supraindividual, then it does not belong to any human being particularly. How can it be asserted that the spirit is connected to a given soul, to a given person, then?

To be sure, these three points show that Watchman's and Heard's theories are not Christian. They could contain some Christian ideas and principles, but the latter are mixed with Hinduist, Buddhist, and even theosophical ideas. Without any doubt, Nee was influenced by Taoism, or by another traditional Chinese teaching. The philosophies of the East often accentuate on the universal, on the common things between the individuals; they reject the individual existence. Hence, Nee's idea is justified to some extent; he was under the influence of the Chinese culture. John Heard was perhaps influenced by theosophy, a movement which was very popular during his time. Still, both conceptions go astray from Christianity. What is then the attitude of Christianity toward the tripartite theory? And in what way will this help to conclude concerning the definition of human nature?

The Relationship between the Mind and the Soul

Summary:

The relationship between the mind and the soul will be examined here. It will be shown that there are many interchangeable terms related to the soul, the mind, and the personality. The mind is the intellectual (or rational) part of the soul. Still, the soul also possesses a free will thanks to which it can move toward God and choose between good and evil. Soul and mind are not corporeal but are partially connected with the body.

The second chapter of the current work has demonstrated that the radical dualism concerning human soul and body is wrong. Manicheanism, in its extreme form, utterly rejects the unity of body and soul. The tripartite theory developed by Christianity stands closer to the truth and the facts: soul, body, and spirit should be seen in their harmony, as an integrated and harmonic whole. They are not separated “parts”²³² which cannot be united.

Christian theologians do not accept Plato’s theory of the antinomy and collision of soul and body, of the “slavery” of the soul perceived as a captive of the body. The body is not unnecessary; its function is important. The very fact that St. Paul speaks of ‘resurrected bodies’ speaks in favor of the “harmony theory.”

“Soul” is a word used frequently; it is met not only in Western but in Eastern philosophies as well. In the previous chapter, spirit was defined. It was demonstrated that it comes from God²³³ and that it is not completely different from the soul. What to say about the relation between soul and mind? Is one’s mind a soul? Is the soul the mind? Are they identical?

²³² The word “part” is not the most appropriate when we speak about human personality, for it indicates material relations. Its use should be only provisional.

²³³ This principle will be analyzed further in this work.

It is important here to define several notions which are often taken as interchangeable:

1. Soul- the soul is a spiritual substance which has taken individual form and has been integrated with a human body. Our soul contains our feelings, emotions, and partially our perceptions. It can be called a spiritual organ receiving life from our Lord. It can communicate directly with God. The soul is the subject matter of theology.

2. Mind- it is partially connected with the soul. It embraces our perceptions, thoughts, knowledge. Philosophers have debated the nature of mind: some claim that mind is merely our intellect; other assert that mind is more than the intellect, that it involved our ability to understand the world and to grasp the essence of God; that our mind is able to contemplate the Highest Being. Here will be employed the latter definition of mind. Mind is the subject matter of psychology, epistemology, and ontology.

3. Consciousness- it comprises the realm of our perceptions and senses. Thanks to our consciousness, man can see, hear, touch, and so forth. It also involves man's state of awareness when he is able to use his organs for perception. To be sure, consciousness exists also when he sleeps, therefore one can speak of different levels of awareness. It is a pity that human sleep has not been examined thoroughly yet and there is a lot to want from the future research of sleep. It should be noted that there are different theories regarding the content of our consciousness (behaviorist, psychoanalytical, phenomenological, Buddhist, etc.). Consciousness is the subject matter of psychology.

4. Personality- it is the complex embracing our character, temperament, memory, attitudes, values. Personality is a whole; hence it cannot be said that it has constituent parts. Personality is partially associated with the Self. There is no agreement over the problem of

whether our drives and instincts are part of our personality or of our Self. Personality is the subject matter of ethics, philosophy, sociology.

5. Self/ego- it is our own identity, our features which make us unique. No one can have the same features, traits, the same self-perception. The Self participates in the life of the soul, but they are different: the soul is more spiritual, and the Self is distinguished by its function to make a given human being unique.

There are different views regarding the nature of the Self. Carl Jung maintains that the Self is an archetype uniting consciousness and unconsciousness. He understands the personality as connected only with the consciousness. Sigmund Freud claims that the Self is the same as the Ego- i.e., this is the state of awareness, of intentionality when a certain human being is aware of their actions, behavior, and perceptions. Ego is opposed to Id (or the subconscious) and Super Ego (morality). The Self/Ego is the subject matter of psychology, ethics, sociology.

As can be seen from these definitions, one can take them only provisionally, since they are still subject of debates and research. This depends on whether the researcher's approach is psychological, ethical, theological, or philosophical. Psychology, for instance, refuses to speak of soul but uses the words mind, consciousness, psyche, instead. Theology, on the other hand, takes mind, consciousness, and the Self as covered by the notion of the soul. Ethics deals mainly with the notions of personality and Self, and classical moralists speak of "soul." The starting point will be the standpoint of Christian theology, which asserts that the soul is immortal and immaterial and that it embraces our memory, perceptions, and cognitive faculty. The mind is the rational faculty of the soul.

An average believer would understand the soul as existing above and separately from the mind. This is correct, although partially: our ability to communicate with God stands higher than our intellect (or reason). The task of the intellect is to gain knowledge of the world and to instruct us what to do in accordance with that knowledge.

The term “substance” is also hard to explain here. Our mind is connected with our body as long as the former processes our perceptions and other data needed for getting knowledge of the world. The human mind is directed outwards, and the soul- inwards. However, the correct definition of this relation is that the soul comprises the mind, and that the mind is one of the constituents (or rather, faculties) of the soul.

If one replaces the word “mind” with “rationality,” then it can be said that there are two main faculties in man’s soul: freedom and rationality. Rationality covers the sphere of the intellectual and the intelligible. The idea of Immanuel Kant that the realm of the intelligible (what can be subject of the intellect) also comprises man’s free will is pertinent and applicable. Christianity teaches something very similar: man was created as a free being, but as a consequence of Original sin, he lost the opportunity to enjoy the presence of God. The freedom of will, however, remained the same. Man is still free; his freedom is proved by the fact that he can do wrong things, he can sin. Freedom is manifested in his choice between good and evil. Whether he chooses good or not, he remains free. An interesting passage concerning this issue is found in Deuteronomy: “This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live” (Deut. 30:19).

Some philosophers can claim that our freedom of will concerns rather our personality, not the soul. The fact that one has free will does not prove that the soul exists. But if the soul does

not exist, then materialism is right; and materialism does not claim that man is free in reality. On the contrary: materialism asserts that certain factors determine all our actions, and that men are nothing but machines! Therefore, only idealism can defend the idea of the freedom of will. Christianity takes the most reliable form of idealism: it maintains that the soul was created free from the very beginning and that it was never a “slave.” This is said also in opposition to the dualism of Manicheanism and Gnosticism.

The mind is as complicated as the freedom of will. Contemporary philosophy understands the mind as the organ of consciousness, as the intellect, the reason, and so forth. The mind can be seen as identical with our rational faculty. Philosophical idealism comprehends the mind as one of the principles of being, and even as the First principle. This is similar to the idea of some Ancient Greek thinkers about Nous, or Logos as such a principle. Greeks understood the world as a cosmos, i.e., as an organized world where everything has its role and function. Thus, they arrived at the conclusion that there is a Universal Mind which governs the world. This conception disappeared later, replaced by the notion of Logos, especially in the context of Christianity. German idealism re-introduced Mind as an ontological category. The philosophy of Georg Hegel is centered on the conception that the Mind is the Absolute. The mind is not simply an organ of consciousness; it is not merely our intellect; the Mind is the Absolute Principle governing our world. This is the theory of Hegel, of German idealism.

This teaching does not stand far from Christianity; and still, it cannot be accepted as valid by Christian theologians. Wisdom and omniscience are attributes of God. The idea of a Universal Mind, thus, should be repudiated from the standpoint of Christianity, unless it is said that God and Mind are the same.

The same should be said about the idea of Universal Consciousness. It is frequently employed by Eastern philosophers (In India, China, Japan). The Universal Consciousness is something like a Cosmic Spirit or Cosmic Soul. It is not personified; one cannot touch or see it. It simply exists; all individuals are part of it. The important thing to note here is that individuals are comprehended as an illusion by the proponents of this idea. Only the universal, only the Whole exists, it is real, it is true; all individuation is wrong, it is a deception. On the other hand, Western philosophy has maintained that consciousness is individual, and that cannot be confirmed and proved that it is universal, or at least collective. Carl Gustav Jung speaks of the “collective unconscious,” but this is a different concept. It is the opposite of consciousness- as a matter of fact, this is a realm which cannot be examined rationally. Man can enter there only by using symbols and by analyzing dreams. Therefore, the “collective unconscious” is not susceptible to rational examination and cannot be the subject of philosophical theories.

Whether the mind is universal or not, then, is not a simple question. To be sure, from the Christian standpoint, the mind cannot be said to stand above God, above the divine. Hence, the mind cannot be absolutely universal, at least as it is defined by contemporary philosophers. Medieval theologians did not say anything about it, since such a question was meaningless to them. Only God is universal, omniscient, omnipresent. God is not only mind, only consciousness; He is much more than that, but one cannot define Him entirely.

Further clarification of the problem can be advanced by turning to Thomas Aquinas’ conception of the soul. Generally, Thomas claims that the human soul exists in unity with the body and that it is not easy to say which properties belong only to the body, and which- only to the soul. He stands against the radical dualism offered by Plato (and Gnosticism, but Thomas at that time did not have enough knowledge of this movement).

Thomas asserts that there are three kinds of souls: nutritive, sensitive, and intellectual. Plants have only nutritive soul; animals possess nutritive and sensitive soul. Man possesses all three kinds, the superior of which is the intellectual one. This does not mean that the soul and the intellect are the same; Thomas simply tries to distinguish the soul with which man is endowed with the souls of plants and animals.

To be sure, Thomas cannot be accused of attributing souls to plants. The term ‘soul’ in this case is used provisionally. It does not mean that plants can speak, think, etc. But they have some “perceptions” and senses. Thanks to them, plants can grow and perform other vital processes. Animals stand much higher; they can react, move, and even have memory. Man does not have the right to claim that a dog or a cat do not have any soul.²³⁴ The owner of the particular dog or cat will tell us that sometimes they behave as if they were human beings. In such a sense, they have sensitive souls, i.e., they can react, to remember, to adapt, and even to show their loyalty to their owner. Nonetheless, man stands higher- he is endowed with intellectual soul. What does this mean?

Thomas starts his analysis of the intellectual soul by proving that it is immortal, incorporeal, and incorruptible. He employs one of the proofs of the immortality of the soul given by Plato (and re-introduced by Aristotle): the soul is immortal because it is the principle of life, and such a principle cannot cease to exist. As Thomas says in his *Summa Theologiae*: “It is manifest that not every principle of vital action is a soul, for then the eye would be a soul, as it is a principle of vision; and the same might be applied to the other instruments of the soul: but it is the ‘first’ principle of life, which we call the soul.”²³⁵ That is, not every organ of the body which

²³⁴ This example is not given by Thomas but was elaborated by the author of this report.

performs vital functions is the soul. The soul is the first principle of life; without it, life could not “flow” in any being. And the first principle is not material, it is not corporeal: “Now, though a body may be a principle of life, or to be a living thing, as the heart is a principle of life in an animal, yet nothing corporeal can be the first principle of life.”²³⁶ This is logical: life cannot cease to exist since this will be in contradiction with its essence. And the soul is life: this is what philosophers have maintained since Plato onward.

The same can be asserted regarding the intellectual principle existing in the soul. As Thomas Aquinas observes: “It must necessarily be allowed that the principle of intellectual operation which we call the soul, is a principle both incorporeal and subsistent. For it is clear that by means of the intellect man can have knowledge of all corporeal things.”²³⁷ The “organ” of this knowledge cannot be corporeal itself; it should stand above all material things in order to know and understand them. Therefore, the intellect is not corporeal. From such a point of view, the intellect is of the same substance as the soul.

What about life after death? Can man gain knowledge about life in Hereafter? What does happen with our body and soul? Thomas has a satisfying answer to this frequently asked question. Our soul and intellect are immortal, i.e., they survive death. Still, the perceptive part of our soul is connected more with the body. Thus, in Hereafter one cannot have the same sensations which one has on earth. Our memory also ceases to exist as long as it is directed only to the past. These elements of our soul are corruptible and changeable.

²³⁵ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, New Advent, 2017, part I, question 75, art. 1, accessed 1 August 2018, <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/>

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, I, 75, art. 1.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, I, 75, art. 2.

This thesis leads to another important statement: that sensation is not really part of the soul. As Thomas Aquinas remarks: “Sensation is not the operation of the soul only. Since, then, sensation is an operation of man, but not proper to him, it is clear that man is not a soul only, but something composed of soul and body.”²³⁸ Plato was wrong in this respect: “Plato, through supposing that sensation was proper to the soul, could maintain man to be a soul making use of the body.” Hence his dualism, which influenced the Gnostic type of radical dualism later.

The intellect, as the renowned theologian observes, is a faculty, or a power of the soul. It is neither an entity nor a substance itself. Not all powers of the soul are incorruptible, sensation does not remain with the soul after death. As Thomas says: “All the powers of the soul belong to the soul alone as their principle. But some powers belong to the soul alone as their subject; as the intelligence and the will. These powers must remain in the soul, after the destruction of the body.”²³⁹ He contrasts them to the powers which will cease to exist after death: “Other powers are subjected in the composite; as all the powers of the sensitive and nutritive parts.”²⁴⁰

Thomas answers that the intellect is not incorruptible: “The intellect is a power of the soul, and not the very essence of the soul. For then alone the essence of that which operates is the immediate principle of operation, when operation itself is its being: for as power is to operation as its act, so is the essence to being.”²⁴¹ Only in God essence and Being coincide, Thomas points out: “In God alone His action of understanding is His very Being. Wherefore in God alone is His

²³⁸ Ibid., I, 75, art. 4.

²³⁹ Ibid., I, 76, art. 8.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., I, 76, art. 8.

²⁴¹ Ibid., I, 79, art. 1.

intellect His essence.”²⁴² This does not mean, however, that mind is God’s essence, and that there is nothing more in His essence. All divine attributes are brought together in His essence, thus man cannot say accurately that God is only wise. God’s wisdom is interwoven with His goodness, with His truthfulness, and so forth.

The human soul is not identical with the human mind; the mind is rather a faculty, a power of the soul. Thomas Aquinas employs the term “intellect.” Are all three terms, “intellect,” “mind,” and “reason” the same thing? Yes, they are. This is a logical consequence of Thomas’ assertion that reason and intellect are identical. They can be seen as separate faculties, but they are still connected with each other and mutually dependent. As he observes: “Human reasoning, by way of inquiry and discovery, advances from certain things simply understood—namely, the first principles; and, again, by way of judgment returns by analysis to first principles, in the light of which it examines what it has found.”²⁴³ Reason conducts logical inferences; the intellect bases its knowledge of the world on them. And still, it can be claimed that these two faculties are the same- they are only two sides of the same power.

The solution offered by St. Thomas Aquinas is compelling and based on sound arguments. The mind is a faculty; it is not a universal entity which is omnipresent. This idea is typical of Western philosophy. Eastern philosophers as well idealists of the type of Hegel would not agree: they claim that Mind is absolute and universal, that every individual mind is only one small part of it. Some, like Plato, speak even of Cosmic (universal) soul. Such ideas, although not anti-Christian, do not sound very Christian. They instead point to pantheism, or the doctrine claiming that the divine is impersonal energy found in every single thing in the world.

²⁴²Ibid., I, 79, art. 1.

²⁴³Ibid., I, 79, art. 8.

God, Spirit and Soul

Summary:

The element which has not been analyzed properly by now is spirit. It will be proved that the spirit is universal, but it is always embodied in individuals (with the exception of the Holy Spirit which exists objectively, as an entity). There are several meanings of the word “spirit,” but the one used by St. Paul is the Holy Spirit. The present subchapter concludes our discussion of human nature by postulating that the latter cannot be understood without taking into account man’s relation with God and the fact that man was created by God.

John Heard relies on Scripture when trying to base his conception on biblical passages. However, he admits that the Holy Bible does not contain the tripartite theory of man, with some exceptions. All of the following passages on the tripartite soul are found in the Epistles of St. Paul. In Romans, St. Paul exposes his moral theory which differs between the spiritual (pneumatical) and unspiritual (“soulish”) man. The following passage speaks about the function of the Spirit of God that will save us from wrongdoing:

For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. (Rom. 8:13-14)

The opposition here is body-spirit, and not body-soul! Still, St. Paul does not dismiss the soul in this passage. He is rather eager to demonstrate that man has to accept the Spirit of God

(the Holy Spirit, Paraclete) to command him, to lead him. If the spirit is within him, then Jesus Christ is within him, and he is blessed, he is sanctified by God, as St. Paul puts it:

There is now no
condemnation for those who are in
Christ Jesus,
because through Christ Jesus the law
of the Spirit of life set me free from the
law of sin and death. (Rom. 8:5)

The phrase “the law of the Spirit of life” is of exceptional significance here. These three words (law, spirit, life) are not only of the same ontological order; they could even be understood as identical, as the same. The spirit is life, and life is the spirit; there is no other life but the life in the spirit. Only the spirit can ensure us with the opportunity to save our souls. Life is to be understood not merely as the earthly forms of life, but also as eternal being (presence) in Heaven. Now, the spirit is the law as well; there cannot be another law. Matter cannot and does not rule; the human body is not the ruler, our spirit is.

The spirit can resurrect us; he is completely capable of doing any miracle. There is another passage in Romans where the word “spirit” is used instead of “soul”:

And if the Spirit of him who raised
Jesus from the dead is living in you, he
who raised Christ from the dead will also
give life to your mortal bodies through
his Spirit, who lives in you (Rom. 8:11).

It is evident that for St. Paul there is a significant difference between the function of the soul and the function of the spirit. Why does he not mention “the soul of God”? It will be blasphemy to say that God has a “soul.” This is the reason for employing another word, “spirit.” This term can be used in various situations and circumstances; it is not restricted only to the sphere of human existence. But it is important to note that St. Paul writes “his Spirit, who lives in

you.” It is clear that St. Paul does not intend to assert that man is tripartite, that man possesses three different parts. It is the Spirit of God which is within us! It is not our own, separately existing, completely independent spirit! St. Paul never writes about spirit which belongs only to one individual, to one person. There is no personal spirit! And this is clarified in the following quotation: “And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us” (Rom. 5:5).

These passages have been misinterpreted as meaning that there is a special part in man which corresponds to the Holy Spirit. This is a part which is exclusively divine; it resembles God in some way. Furthermore, as Nee and Heard remark, it is of divine origin. Hence, it was never created, but it was given to man. This is a severe deception which could lead to the heretical idea that man is partially divine (God)! And this is logical: if there is a part in man which was never created, which therefore existed forever and will exist forever, then man is divine, even to some degree! But the referenced quotations demonstrate the opposite: it is not man who makes himself immortal; it is God Who gives man the gift of immortality! Men are not born immortal; they are not created immortal; they are made immortal by God. God allows them to have eternal life, to stay with Him in heaven, and to rejoice in His Grace and Love. This is not in their power, and they cannot aspire to it; they can only hope and believe that God will save them, that God will give them eternal life.

The objective nature of the spirit becomes evident in the First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians St. Paul teaches the following:

We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.
This is what we speak, not in words

taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned (1 Cor. 2:12-14).

The central idea of the passage is the thesis that our wisdom, our powers, our abilities, are nothing in comparison with the wisdom, powers, and capabilities of God. God's Wisdom goes beyond our understanding, and for the man "without spirit" it will not speak or amount to anything. The second part of the passage contains the important phrase: "The man without the Spirit." There is only one Spirit, and this is the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is universal; it, still, can have individual embodiment, meaning that the Spirit will reside in the human soul. Watchman Nee and John Heard also claim that the Spirit is universal, the reader will be right to object. This is true; however, for Nee and Heard (the proponents of the tripartite theory) the Spirit is an entity in itself, it is not part of God.

God gives us wisdom, knowledge, hope, strength through the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is thus a medium, and at the same time, it is of divine essence being the Third Person of the Most Holy Trinity. At any rate, the following passage proves that the Spirit is not inborn to us, man is not naturally endowed with it, but rather the Spirit comes to him (through acceptance of or openness to the faith, as a free and unmerited gift):

Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit,

to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues (1 Cor. 12:7-10).

A wide variety of abilities and powers are mentioned here. Some people receive hope, others- knowledge, others- miraculous powers, and so forth. What is interesting here is the phrase “distinguishing between spirits.” It indicates that St. Paul still employs the word “spirit” as meaning spiritual substance (soul). These spirits can be the Holy Spirit (as part of the Holy Trinity), the spirit of man, and even a spirit of a demon. Hence, the one who has received such a gift will be able to know what comes from God and what comes from the devil; what is true and what is false; what is moral and what is not. The word “spirit” is not used as meaning a completely independent part of man; it is simply a substitute for “soul.” Still, it is clear that the Holy Spirit, or the Spirit of God, gives us all these capabilities. God through the Holy Spirit chooses what to give and to whom. All this is done for the well-being of mankind; God does it because He loves man: “To each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.” Hence, we should not be proud and ask God for more and more; we have to be meek, and to be happy because God has given us a certain gift. One might be deprived of the gift of interpretation of different languages, but another fellow Christian will have it. It is not important who has received the gift; all that is of some significance is that God has given the gift to someone. One will help the others with his gift; another person- with his gift; and so forth. This is the idea expressed in the passage.

God not only shows His love for mankind in such a manner. He maintains our likeness to Him; He redeemed and saved us and continues to help us return to our former glory in His own image which was distorted after Original Sin:

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where
the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.
And we, who with unveiled faces all
reflect the Lord's glory, are being
transformed into his likeness with ever increasing
glory, which comes from the
Lord, who is the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:17-18).

The Lord is the Spirit; there is no other Spirit. There are still other spiritual substances.

Man is constantly transformed into His image; but in his actual state, man is not pristinely and perfectly His image since he has a partially sinful nature. He needs the help of the Holy Spirit. It will help him overcome sin and wrongdoing.

Sinfulness, to say it once again, is not identical with the body and the material substances in general. This is quite clear in the Epistles of St. Paul. To sin means to forget about the spirit, to behave unspiritually; but to satisfy the vital needs of one's body is far from sin. Our body is a temple of the Spirit, as St. Paul says in other passages. Man is not allowed to dismiss its needs completely, or to turn against our body in general (using torture, etc.). The teaching of St. Paul is absolutely anti-Gnostic, and he never expresses disgust of the body. Carnality is the cause and manifestation of sin; it is seen as the natural instincts and bodily needs controlling one's behavior and moral conduct, affecting one's intellect and worldview. Man must purify himself from carnality; this is meant in the following passage from the Second Epistle to the Corinthians: "Let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God" (2 Cor. 7:1).

These passages demonstrate the unsoundness of the thesis that human spirit exists as a completely independent entity, and the lack of it means that the soul will remain under the influence of the body for all of one's life. The Spirit is one and universal; it is divine, and it helps us overcome our weaknesses. This is the Christian standpoint, and it is clearly expressed in the

Catechism of the Catholic Church. As it is remarked there: “Sometimes the soul is distinguished from the spirit: St. Paul, for instance, prays that God may sanctify his people ‘wholly,’ with ‘spirit and soul and body’ kept sound and blameless at the Lord’s coming.”²⁴⁴ The vocabulary used by St. Paul may lead to some confusion. But these passages need proper interpretation which can be summarized as follows: “The Church teaches that this distinction does not introduce a duality into the soul. ‘Spirit’ signifies that from creation man is ordered to a supernatural end and that his soul can gratuitously be raised beyond all it deserves to communion with God.”²⁴⁵ The soul is of spiritual nature; it can even be said that the soul is spiritual: “One has to consider the soul to be the ‘form’ of the body: i.e., it is because of its spiritual soul that the body made of matter becomes a living, human body; spirit and matter, in man, are not two natures united, but rather their union forms a single nature.”²⁴⁶ The harmony of soul and body is ensured by their interaction, by the fact that the soul controls the body, and at the same time, the body is the “home” for the soul. The soul cannot and should not exist without an embodiment. By dividing the soul itself into two substances, or parts- soul and spirit- the harmony mentioned above will not have any basis. There is no war; there is not any struggle between soul and spirit. The soul is of spiritual essence, and that is it! There is no “spiritual soul” and “unspiritual soul.” The soul is only one! The person can be spiritual or unspiritual; not the soul.

Before reaching our conclusion, it is good to say a few words more about the cultural context of the tripartite theory. It should be clear that the opinions presented by Watchamnn Nee and John Heard stand very close to the Evangelical version of Christianity. This is explained by

²⁴⁴ Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2012, 367, Accessed August 1, 2018. http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_INDEX.HTM

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 365.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

Tim Staples in his article “Is Man Tripartite or Bipartite?” As he observes, “This idea of man as essentially ‘tripartite’ verses the Catholic and biblical notion of man as a body/soul composite is a rather common misconception among Evangelicals and Pentecostals.”²⁴⁷ It is well known that Evangelicals emphasize the role of the Holy Spirit. The teaching that man is of tripartite nature is not heretical. Still, it goes astray from the traditional teaching of the Christian Church. All of the reasons to believe that the Apostles transferred their knowledge to the future generations through the Church are well-established; hence, it is better to adhere to the Church’s heritage, Tradition, and teaching in reference to such vital questions. Evangelicals focus their efforts on the personal relation man-God, and they believe that the Holy Spirit is the medium which allows man to communicate with the divinity. Nevertheless, the role of the Holy Spirit should not be overestimated. The Holy Spirit is one of the Persons of the Most Holy Trinity; but it cannot stand above God in general (meaning, above the other two Persons). The believer who wants to observe the practice and teaching of the Christian Church should keep this in mind.

Tim Staples asserts that the Spirit, as it is described in St. Paul’s Epistles, is precisely the third Person of the Most Holy Trinity. The Spirit is divine; it is God, and God is Spirit. But the Spirit is not an individual entity belonging to various human beings. As Staples explains: “For St. Paul, the ‘spiritual’ element in man represents the God-consciousness that is introduced into the life of a man through grace. We get a great picture of the Pauline understanding of this in I Corinthians 2 and 3.”²⁴⁸ Interpreting Romans 8, Staples observes that “one is either being led by the Spirit and so is in friendship with God, or we would say, he is ‘in a state of grace,’ or one is

²⁴⁷ Tim Staples, “Is Man Tripartite or Bipartite?”, par. 3, Accessed 1 August 2018, <https://www.catholic.com/magazine/online-edition/is-man-tripartite-or-bipartite>

²⁴⁸ Ibid., par. 13.

apart from grace and therefore in a state of being wherein one ‘cannot please God.’”²⁴⁹

Therefore, the use of the word “Spirit” refers to God and the striving of man to become united with God once again. Staples concludes, completely in accordance with the teaching of the Christian Church, with the following: “What is most important for us here is to note that St. Paul’s introduction of the ‘spirit, soul and body’ in I Thess. 5:23 and elsewhere was not intended to teach man to be “tripartite.” Man is essentially a body/soul composite.”²⁵⁰ Staples adds that “St. Paul is introducing the ‘God-consciousness’ that is introduced into man’s soul through grace and elevates him to a level of understanding and loving God that he could not attain to according to his nature alone.”²⁵¹ The teaching that the spirit is in man, and it only needs awakening, is quite harmful for the true faith.

It was essential to demonstrate that the spirit present in man is of an objective nature, that it exists outside man, and that it does not originate in man. The spirit comes from God; and our spiritual substance, the soul, also comes from God. What is man? Man cannot be understood without referring to the fact of his creation. Man was created, this is the first fact; and the second essential fact is that the Creator is God (not aliens or some artificial intelligence, for someone might propose even such an absurd answer). If one simply defines man as consisting of body and soul, they will not be capable of explaining where the soul comes from. Of course, materialism would say that the soul is “a function of the body.” The soul is merely a “by-product” and nothing more. The soul has to be discussed as a separate entity which is not entirely dependent upon the body, and should not be considered as a function of the body.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., par. 20.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., par. 22.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

Still, in what way does the conception of man as God's creation change our understanding of human nature? There are many aspects in which this change becomes visible. In a moral sense, this means that there is objective good in the world, part of which is present in us. The cognitive aspect indicates that man is an extraordinary being that is significantly different from all other beings and cannot be properly compared with the latter. Psychologically, this leads to the conclusion that God is protecting us; it is known that He will never abandon His children. Human nature cannot be comprehended without God. Plenty of mysteries will remain unexplained if one refuses to accept the proposed view. Man should be understood in the context of Creation, of his relationship with the Creator, and his mission to become one with God once again.

The spirit is the key concept helping us arrive at the latter conclusion. Animals possess something which could be called consciousness. A dog interacts with other animals. It has reflexes; it responds quickly to any danger. The dog can be trained. It has perceptions, senses, and it can feel pain and pleasure. This is what is called consciousness. Still, its consciousness is of lower nature than what human beings have. Man can think and plan; the dog can only respond to the actual conditions. It is not able to plan. It does not know what it will be doing tonight or tomorrow morning; its way of living is controlled by instincts, without which the dog would become disoriented. Furthermore, the dog cannot draw paintings or write poems or construct buildings; the dog cannot construct a space shuttle; and finally, the dog will never be capable of grasping the concept of a Higher Being which exceeds everything existing in the world. For that reason, it is said that animals do not have souls, even though some philosophers believed in this (Aristotle). But when describing the consciousness of animals as "soul" these thinkers did not intend to attribute thought to animals. What was meant was precisely the fact that animals have

all five senses that man has, and that animals feel pain and pleasure. Animals are not mere objects, so they need to be treated well- this is what such philosophers were eager to express.

Now, the spirit comes into play here. Spirituality is the ability to understand the world in its totality, to grasp its infinity and vastness; spirituality is the awareness of the existence of the Highest Being which exceeds any other being; spirituality is the awareness that there is an immaterial entity which exists for all eternity. Man is a spiritual being; there is no other being on earth with the same ability. Man is the only being which can grasp the infinity of the world; which can go beyond this infinity and postulate the Being of an entity which has created the world. "Immortality," "eternity," "forever"- these are concepts which only man can understand. They do not exist in the realm of animals. Not only man is able to understand them; it can be assumed that man is the only living being endowed with the ability to communicate with and through the Holy Spirit.

As an image in the likeness of God, man is the most appreciated and important creation. Our wisdom guides us in this world; our heart drives our good deeds; our intellect helps us understand how great is the act of creation, and how magnificent is our Creator. Even though man is not divine himself, he stands higher in the hierarchy of the existing beings. This is demonstrated in Psalm 8:

What is man that you are mindful of him,
the son of man that you care for him?
You made him a little lower than the
heavenly beings and crowned him with
glory and honor.
You made him ruler over the works of
your hands; you put everything under
his feet:
all flocks and herds, and the beasts of
the field,
the birds of the air, and the fish of the

sea, all that swim the paths of the seas (Ps. 8:4-8).

Knowing how great our Lord is, man must be thankful for His Love and Mercy, for His Grace. The very fact that men exist, that they are here should provoke their gratitude. Their appearance in the world is not an accident; it did not take place by chance. They are obliged to appreciate this knowledge and to pass it on to everyone. Wisdom, goodness, and faith are not individual matter: they are universal, and everyone should aspire to them. As St. Paul says in his Epistle to the Colossians:

And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light (Col. 1:10-12).

To live a life worthy of God is to know the truth of the origin of man, thus being able to understand his nature. Through God, we will understand what is man; and through man, man will find God.

Contemporary Ministerial Context

Summary:

Two worldviews are contrasted here: the Christian and the atheist (secularist) worldview. It is shown that the former has many advantages over the latter. One of the most important is the fact that our self-knowledge is realized in and through God.

To find themselves, men have to turn first to God. That is, if man wants to gain more knowledge of human nature, it is necessary that one addresses the problem of the essence of God and His relations with man. Something is missing here: why not to perceive soul, body and spirit as entirely isolated elements, detached from each other? Science will require to carry out a careful and detailed analysis of these three elements.

The answer is to be found in our perspective, in our point of departure from which one can start the journey into anthropology. This work expresses clearly the point of view of Christianity, but without adhering to strict dogmatics. The distinction between the “soulish” people and the “pneumatic” spiritual people (St. Paul) has been made. It was pointed out then that there are believers that can be “soulish,” i.e., still can be attached to earthly matters, to material things. Hence, it is not easy to divide all people into two groups: believers and non-believers (atheists). To be sure, such a classification should not be understood as having absolute character. Still, these two worldviews will be opposed to each other, although the fact that even some believers can be “soulish,” and some non-believers can be open to Christianity²⁵² and the idea of the reality of God will not be overlooked.

²⁵² Some people identify themselves with atheism, but they have the vague idea of something superior existing in the world. They rather reject the classical conception of God, not the reality of the divine. They are open to the idea of God and could be converted into Christianity.

The Christian perspective should be contrasted with the secular one. What does one see through the lens of secularism (atheism, agnosticism, materialism)? A particular example is abortion. The controversy over abortions is not a conflict of individual, personal, social, or political nature. It is a matter of worldview. The Christian worldview understands life as having superior value; life shall not be taken in any way. This is a moral principle given by God. Therefore, man is obliged to help all human beings as long as this is possible. The atheist, on the contrary, will say that life cannot be a supreme value, since it emerged “by random chance” and is a product of evolution. Therefore, mankind should not take care of all human beings, especially babies that are still unborn. The atheist will assert that abortion is an “earthly affair,” that it should not be put in the context of an absolutely objective moral system. This, to say it once again, is not a political issue (although sometimes it can be used in political debates); it is a confrontation of worldviews. Contemporary legislation in the United States has not banned abortions because legislation is based entirely on atheism, i.e., on the idea that God does not exist; therefore any moral principle perceived as coming from Him are to be seen as relative. To be sure, the separation of church and state is important nowadays, and every modern state is based on such separation. However, this separation has gone too far in this country, and the result of it is that the Church is marginalized, it does not have any political influence, even though the majority of the citizens of this country are Christians. A worldview can have political consequences.

The atheist (or secularist) worldview contains several particular doctrines. Evolutionism, hedonism, and rationalism are among them. Evolutionism is essentially connected with scientism, or the attitude which takes science as a dominant authority in all matters, even in the spiritual ones. The atheist sees the world as entirely rational, as susceptible to rational analysis. There are no mysteries in this world; there is nothing which cannot be known by employing rational means, the

tools of formal logic. Hedonism is the logical consequence, given the idea that there is no hereafter and that God is no real. What else remains but to have pleasures and “live for the moment”? The atheist does not think about the afterlife; he is not convinced that moral values are absolute. On the contrary- he comprehends morality as having relative, transitory character. Moral values change over time, he says; one cannot find any value which has persisted over time and is seen as a supreme value by all civilizations in all historical eras. Such persons do not think about the consequences of their acts on earth.

Evidently, not every atheist is a hedonist; some atheists are really good people, adhering to moral principles. Still, they are rather an exception. Atheists, or the people holding onto the secularist worldview, are too materialistic; all the time thinking of incomes, of material goods, of material gainings, instead of reflecting on the meaning of life and the purpose of human existence. There is no any search for the meaning of life, for, as Albert Camus claims, life is an absurdity, and absurdity is life; there is nothing meaningful in life. All man encounters in this world is a pure absurdity, as the French existentialist points out: “In a universe suddenly divested of illusions and lights, man feels an alien, a stranger. His exile is without remedy since he is deprived of the memory of a lost home or the hope of a promised land. This divorce between man and this life, the actor and his setting, is properly the feeling of absurdity.”²⁵³ Camus goes on further by asking the question: “What, in fact, is the absurd man? He who, without negating it, does nothing for the eternal. Not that nostalgia is foreign to him. But he prefers his courage and his reasoning. The first teaches him to live without appeal and to get along with what he has; the second informs him of

²⁵³ Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays* (Vintage Books, 1991), 6.

his limits.”²⁵⁴ Man is abandoned in this world; he should have the courage to overcome the difficulties. Still, courage and self-confidence are not enough.

One can easily see the internal contradictions in such a worldview. If life is an absurdity, why should man submit himself to pleasure? He should be sad and live in sorrow because life does not have any meaning! Or one should commit suicide. But even atheists feel that life is of supreme value; that is why they do not commit suicide. This does not indicate, still, that they think of God or afterlife; but they conclude that Christian morality is universal and true. They get to know (gradually) that the principles of Christian morality are very important and that they are rooted in divine wisdom.

Christianity provides us with a narrative which sheds light on our existence on earth. But that is not all: by comparing and contrasting earthly existence to our existence in the afterlife, man can understand better the meaning of life and what is our purpose. In short, man can answer the question: Why is he here? What should he do here, on earth? Christianity is our guiding light in this world full of sorrow, pain, confusion, despair; but it is also our guide to a world of joy, happiness, pleasures. It is not true that the faith in God is a “consolation.” Hedonism is the real consolation: by submitting himself to pleasures, the hedonist forgets about the pain and the existential vacuum (the feeling that life has no meaning).

Our identity is not absolute. Man is not the only rational being in the world. To understand what man is, he needs to understand what God is. But to do the latter, man has to turn to the personality of Christ, since God in Himself remains in mystery, above our intellect. By referring to Christ, man can know more about God. Man has to follow His example, His model, in order to

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 66.

begin fulfilling himself. Man is not a complete being without God; this cannot be denied even by atheists.

Now, if the focus is placed onto God's Commandments, it will be shown that they are not merely instructions formulated by God because He is "strict." On the contrary, this list of commandments is life; it leads to eternal life. If one perceives God's Ten Commandments as ten "dry" rules which do not have anything common with life or reality, he is wrong. Mankind has to transform themselves, and they are not capable of doing this alone. Man needs the help of a superior being; this is our Creator to Whom man can turn. God loves His children, although Adam and Eve sinned, and in spite of all their wrong deeds. God wants from man to change in order to restore the initial relations with human beings.

Without God, man has lost his moral compass; man cannot live in peace. As Camus says, we have to live precisely because the world is an absurdity; but this assertion is an absurdity in itself. Man cannot live without having a goal, a purpose, a compass! The Christian worldview offers humanity all of these. As Christ tells us: "I am the way, the Truth and the life, no one can come to the Father except through me" (John 14:6). This is our guiding light; without it, man is left in darkness.

Now, as it can be concluded, humanity has to turn to Christianity to understand man, to grasp the nature of man. It cannot be done alone, and this is a thesis rejecting the anthropocentrism of all existentialists, materialists, Marxists, and other philosophers denying the reality of God. But there is something more here: man has to think of our deeds and conduct on earth. Man must follow the model of Christ, the model to be followed by every human being. In Christ man is human, and through Christ he discovers himself. The thought of the Judgment Day should not be his only motive to observe all the principles exposed in the Bible. Man's driving force should be the desire

to understand themselves and to be autonomous individuals. To be real humans means to know what man is, and to know the nature of man, is to behave like real human beings. Man's proper knowledge will lead to proper action, and appropriate actions will help him improve and gain more critical knowledge.

Apparently, the Judgment Day is not to be ignored. Someday it will come and all will have to listen to God, to His Judgment (cf. Rev. 20:12-15; Mat. 12:36-37; Rom. 14:12; Heb. 9:27). As St. Paul says: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10).

In conclusion, the opposition between the Christian and the atheist (secularist) worldviews can be articulated. The former has plenty of advantages: it explains the world accurately; it tells man what to do; it provides him with essential knowledge about himself; it helps him make sense of life; it prevents him from submitting himself to the endless search for pleasures; and so forth. By listening to the wise words as exposed in Scripture, man is able to understand his human condition, and to find his place in the world. God helps him to do so. As it is said in Psalms: "The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple" (Ps. 119:130). As the author goes on: "Turn to me and have mercy on me as you always do to those who love your name. Direct my footsteps according to your word; let no sin rule over me" (Ps. 119:132-3).

Man is far and near God at once. Man can gain knowledge about himself in and through God. How is that possible? The explanation is: Man is an image of God. What kind of image is that? Why is it an image at all? This is the topic of the following subchapter.

The Image of God in Man

Summary:

Man is an image of God, as it is said in the Bible and as Christian theology has claimed. Here will be analyzed the senses in which man can be considered an “image” of God. It is shown that this rather an analogy. Another dimension of the issue is discussed as regards of Christ understood as the image of God, according to St. Paul.

One of the fundamental dogmas of Christian theology claims that God created man as His image and likeness. This is repeated so frequently that most do not even realize what the word “image” means here. Sometimes there are theological discussions regarding this point, but they are not very interesting and attractive.

The idea of the creation of man as the image of God is expressed in the book of Genesis in the following way:

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground” (Gen. 1:26).

This is the moment of the creation of Adam and Eve, the first human beings. It is clearly stated that man will rule over all animals, all creatures. This idea is repeated in Psalms, where the author says the following:

You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet (Ps. 8:5-6).

There is no dispute that these verses concern the nature of human beings. The author understands man as the highest created being, standing above all other creatures. Then, it can be argued that the phrase “image of God” points to the fact that man is the master of all creatures, that he has the power to rule over all of them, in the same fashion in which God does. Psalm 8 generally refers to the relation God-man, to the hope and trust in God which the given person has: the hope to be saved and protected from evil, trust in the might and power of God.

Now the things become more evident. As it seems, man is an analogy of God. What does this mean?

We should first turn to the word “image.” It comes from the Latin “imago.” As the Latin translation says, man is “imago Dei.” Today the meaning of this word is much different than in the Middle Ages. Man associates “image” with “picture” or with “photo.” Actually, the modern use of this word stands very near to the term “iconic sign” coined by the American semiotician and philosopher Charles Peirce²⁵⁵. Peirce divided all signs into three types: iconic signs (icons), symbols, and index signs. An icon is a sign which completely imitates its original source

²⁵⁵ Nicole Everaert-Desmedt, “Peirce’s Semiotics,” *Signo*, cf. sect. 2.4.2, accessed 1 August 2018, <http://www.signosemio.com/peirce/semiotics.asp>

(something like a replica or a copy). A symbol is a sign which only points to another entity by emphasizing a given property which the latter possesses (a statue of a lion can be interpreted as a symbol of power). Symbols usually point to abstract entities (love, power, liberty). Index signs consist in the manifestation of a causal chain: smoke is the index sign of fire. Thus, man has the effect of a given cause; the index sign is the effect, or is tightly connected with this effect.

Given the teaching of the creation of the world and man, these three types of signs can be employed:

1. An iconic sign- the Creation of man cannot be interpreted as an iconic sign, for it means that man should be the copy (or replica, or imitation)- of the original, or God. One cannot say that man completely imitates God, since man is a finite being, and God is an infinite being. It can be hypothesized that man is an image of Christ, then- because Christ (during His earthly existence) had the physical appearance of a human being, and He possesses double nature- human and divine at once. As long as Christ is God, man can be seen as His image (because of the likeness as regards of man's physical appearance). As long as Christ possesses divine nature, however, man cannot be comprehended as His image.

Furthermore, the teaching that man is "imago Dei" does not mean that God is "man's image." It is quite wrong to think that God is similar to man, that God has a physical appearance, that He has similar needs and desires. This wrong idea is rooted in our anthropocentrism, or the attitude which grasps every entity as similar to man and "humanizes" it. Man is God's image, not vice versa.

2. A symbol- man is not precisely a symbol of God, since God is not merely an abstract entity, but He is a Person (and even Three Persons). Notwithstanding, if one replaces the term

“symbol” with “analogy,” they will be on the right way: man performs a function which is analogous to God’s role: man rules and stands above all creatures. Man is God’s counterpart, in such a sense.

3. An index sign- man can be comprehended as an index sign of God, in the sense that man was created by God (effect and cause). The very existence of man and all creatures proves the reality of God. This is valid as of the existence of the world. Many theologians have remarked this point: that the existence of the world itself points to a Creator. This is another possible interpretation of man as an “image of God.” Still, it instead says that man is a sign of God, not precisely an image.

Point 2 and point 3 can be used in our attempt to shed more light on human nature. Man is not a precise “copy” or imitation of God. There is an essential connection between God and us, Creator and creation. It was planned by God; He did not create man without a purpose. This is clearly shown in Genesis 1:1 through 2:4. God created the world ex nihilo (out of nothing), and He created everything as “good.” That is, man was also “good” in the beginning. It is important to note once again that Christianity rejects the radical dualism of Gnosticism (especially Manicheanism): the world was good, the creatures were good, human beings were good. The fact that the world is partially material does not indicate that this part is “bad.”

To go further with our inference, Man was designed to be good, together with all creatures. But the degree of goodness of man is much higher than of all animals and other things in the world. Hence, it can be assumed that goodness is what connects man with God: man was meant to be good in the way in which God is good. Unfortunately, our predecessors, Adam and Eve, commit a disastrous sin which changed our nature. This distorted, and almost destroyed the

relation God-man. As Andrew Greenwell points out, the process of diversion of man from God started with Original sin. The purpose of the Church is to stop this process and restore the original relation: “The Church will not allow man to divert himself, indeed to deceive himself by hiding himself, from facing the fact that he suffers from original sin. She will prevent him from trying to use foils to avoid having to confront his deep guilt, and his deep need for God the Redeemer”²⁵⁶. This knowledge is important, as Greenwell remarks: “The Church is fully cognizant of the tragic flaw that is resident in the intimate parts of man and which tends to bar him from his destiny. However, she is not, by any means pessimistic.”²⁵⁷ Knowledge will lead to proper action. If one rejects the truth described in Scripture, the initial relation God-man will never be restored.

Original sin means that man is not the right and true image of God. However, Christianity sees man as endowed with many vital capabilities. The image of God, although distorted, will remain in human beings. The rational faculty is what distinguishes us from all other creatures. This is the faculty which could not develop out of nothing, by random chance, as evolutionism claims. How can the rational faculty evolve over the millennia? There cannot be “weaker” and “stronger” rational faculty. The intellect is always the same; it cannot change. This is what is meant when it is said that man is God’s image: man has always been the same, since Original sin onward (this, according to the Bible, is the official beginning of human history). Our identity does not change.

There is another sense in which men are *imago Dei*. Besides the rational faculty, there are

²⁵⁶ Andrew Greenwell, “Catholic Social Teaching: The Human Person is Made in the Image of God,” *Catholic Online*, par. 12, accessed 1 August 2018, <https://www.catholic.org/news/hf/faith/story.php?id=43859>

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, par. 18.

human soul and human person. Soul, person, and rationality are interwoven. This is demonstrated in the Catechism of the Catholic Church: “The divine image is present in every man. It shines forth in the communion of persons, in the likeness of the unity of the divine persons among themselves.”²⁵⁸ That is, God’s image is visible in the union of all human beings seen as persons. This is an interesting idea: the community represents the Holy Trinity, although the former is not the precise imitation of the latter. Their relation is rather a relation of analogy.

Human community is a community of persons, not merely of individuals. Men are persons as long as they keep contact with the divine, as long as they feel and are aware of their likeness to God. In the Catechism, the following is stated: “The human person participates in the light and power of the divine Spirit. By his reason, he is capable of understanding the order of things established by the Creator. By free will, he is capable of directing himself toward his true good.”²⁵⁹ Two notions are important here: person and community. Only persons can build a community. Our society, unfortunately, is not entirely built by persons but rather by individuals. Perhaps the reader will not agree with this statement: man knows that every individual is a person. But this objection is incorrect: these two words signify different things. Every human being is an individual, that is, separate from the rest. As individuals, men have needs, desires, interests; but they do not have moral values, they are deprived of spirituality. Only the person is aware of how important are Good and Truth. Christianity narrows down this definition and says that a person is only the one who has firm faith in God and acts in accordance with this faith. As the Catechism states: “He who believes in Christ becomes a son of God. This filial adoption

²⁵⁸ *Catechism*, 1702.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 1704.

transforms him by giving him the ability to follow the example of Christ.”²⁶⁰

This idea is employed by Greenwell, who emphasizes the fact that “*imago Dei*” is the person. In his already quoted article “Catholic Social Teaching: The Human Person is Made in the Image of God,” he carries out an analysis of the phrase “image of God” and arrives at the conclusion that this is the person, and not merely the individual. As Greenwell writes: “Only persons are made in the image of God, have a capacity for God, and have supernatural destinies. Remove God from the picture, therefore, and invariably the concept of person becomes unintelligible.”²⁶¹ Therefore, the person is the true image of God; not merely man as a creature, as a being created by God. Human beings do not simply exist; they are. As Greenwell states: “The notion of person, is therefore a word about man’s being. Man is a person because of who he is, because of his being what he is, not because of what he is capable of doing or becoming, because of what functions, mental, psychological, biological, etc. he is capable of performing.”²⁶² In short, man’s essence is not simply his powers, his capacities; there is something beyond all these functions, abilities, etc. This can be found in the relation God-man; in the fact that man is superior to all other creatures; in the fact that only man has a soul (or, rational soul, according to the definition of Thomas Aquinas). Cats and dogs are not persons; they cannot become such. But some people are not real persons: they lack a proper understanding of their role in the world, of their purpose, of the meaning of life. They are deprived of any fundamental system of values, thus living only “for the moment.” Such words may hurt someone, but this is the truth. Not everyone is a person; as individuals, one can possess, one can

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 1709.

²⁶¹ Greenwell, par. 3.

²⁶² Ibid., par. 6.

have, one can act; but as persons, one is, one can be, and one can be real. This is the idea implicitly manifested in Greenwell's article.

Another interesting point to be noted is the description of Christ as "image of God." It is found in various epistles written by St. Paul. In Colossians the apostle states the following regarding Christ:

For he has rescued us from the
dominion of darkness and brought us
into the kingdom of the Son he loves,
in whom we have redemption, the
forgiveness of sins.
He is the image of the invisible God,
the firstborn over all creation (Col. 1:13-15).

Why is Christ an "image"? If Christ is the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, He cannot be an image of any other Person. The internal relations within the Trinity are not based on imitation. Maybe the proper answer can be found by turning to two other passages. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians, the apostle writes: "And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven" (1 Cor. 15:49). We are the likeness of Adam, the first man; and Christ is called 'man from heaven.' Many ideas can be discovered here through a subtle analysis: (1) that man contains both the earthly and the heavenly man; (2) that man still bears the guilt due to Original sin, the sin of Adam and Eve; (3) that Christ is our future, our hope, and that man will be saved through Him; and others.

Another passage is found in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians: "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (2 Corinthians 4:4). The words "glory," "light," "God" are

used in the same sentence. God is Light, and He is glorious; but why does the apostle say that Christ is an “image”? This issue does not seem very clear even now, after turning to three different epistles.

Christ is not an “image” in the true sense of the term. Man is an image as long as he is an analogy of God. However, Christ does not correspond to any of the three senses of the term “sign” as described above. Christ is not an “image” of Himself; for, He is God, He is One Person of the Most Holy Trinity.

There is one sense in which Christ can be relatively seen as an “image” of God. That is, He is a union of human and divine nature. His human nature “reflects” the divine; but they also exist in unity. Christ came to earth in the form of a human being. He lived, suffered, and died like a man. In this sense is He an “image.” However, taking into account His miracles, Resurrection, and His being as the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, He is much more than an “image.” He is the truth, He is the reality, He is “the original.”

What does St. Paul want to tell his audience, then? What is hidden in his words about Christ as an ‘image’ of God?

Jesus Christ is the perfect “image” of God. He is what one should aspire to. He is man’s ideal, and one must follow Him. Human beings are finite; they are not perfect, unlike Christ. Therefore, they are a “distorted image” of God. This can be corrected, and Christ came for this. By following Him, man will be able to turn to God again and try to be a perfect “image” of Him. Man “shall bear the likeness of the man from heaven,” as St. Paul says.

All of this leads us to one final remark. Man is God’s counterpart. Although imperfect and finite, men perform the function of God on earth, as long as they are capable of acting as rational beings. Their connection with God is essential; the image is connected with the original,

and the original is the ideal form of existence of the imitation (image). Nonetheless, men can never become God: this is not their goal. They should only aspire to union with God in a special state of communion called beatitude. Then they will be the correct and true image of God.

Conclusion

We often say that someone is “spiritual.” In the abstract sense, this means that one is not a hedonist, one does not strive only to satisfy the needs of one’s body. Interestingly, spirituality has different degrees. A certain person is “more spiritual” than another. In some sense, all men are spiritual beings but they are positioned at different levels. Even the ones that are called “materialist” or “epicurean” can open themselves to spirituality. Under certain circumstances, everyone is able to start thinking about the meaning of life, about the mission he/she has in this life, about the problem of the immortality of the soul, about the reality of a Supreme Being (or Intelligence) which exists independently from our mind and thought. There are situations in which it can be said that one’s spirituality is awakened. Evangelicals speak about a “second birth” here. Of course, this is simply a metaphor, but it indicates that men are never absolutely the same; that even the worst materialist can become a spiritual person of the type described by St. Paul (cf. Rom. 12). Christianity assumes that man is a spiritual being, and in this sense, man stands above the rest of the beings inhabiting this world. The very act of creation has allowed us to communicate with God! Men must never forget their createdness, the fact that they did not appear on earth by accident (as evolutionism asserts), and the fact that they are the image of God. What they call spirituality is their openness toward God, their desire to accept Him in their hearts. There is no need to define spirituality furthermore: there could be plenty of definitions, but the one which has been presented is the most universal and encompassing. Men are spiritual beings, and as such every one of them, at some moment in time will search for God, will try to find God and to become united with Him. There is no exception: it is in man’s nature.

The most celebrated theory about man’s nature, without a doubt, is the evolutionist one. It is taught everywhere. Evolutionism holds man to be a completely natural being, with only

slight differences from the rest of the animal world. As we showed, the weak point of evolutionism is the fact that it reduces man's powers to pure biology: the intellect is nothing but a function of the brain, and the soul is a function of the body. Even though some evolutionists such as Konrad Lorenz claim that morality should be separated from the problem of the origin of man, it is evident that none of all evolutionists in the academic world will admit that the soul could function autonomously from the body.

The vision of man as an entirely natural being is wrong. Now, what if this theory is applied to the sphere of morality? The philosophy of hedonism is the logical consequence of this idea. If men are merely natural beings, man is controlled by his instincts and has to satisfy natural needs. The pleasure principle does not follow from all this necessarily, but still it is clear that one of the basic instincts men have is precisely the latter. In the Second Chapter it was demonstrated that human behavior is not governed and guided by the pleasure principle. Freud's conception is way too abstract: it is a hypothetical speculation and not an empirically proven theory. Furthermore, hedonism dismisses the function which pain and suffering have in life. Suffering is one of the main drives of personal growth, and in a world without pain and suffering, no one would be able to develop, to grow personally and spiritually.

Rationalism then comes into play. If man is not simply a natural being, and not guided entirely by the pleasure principle, then mankind can be defined as intelligent beings, as beings endowed with intellect. This is perhaps the most celebrated definition of man. It still has its drawbacks: man's existence is full of hopes, feelings, emotions, memories, exciting moments. What does the intellect have to do with all of them? Faith and hope, love and trust, are all independent of any intellect and conceptualization. One can be a righteous person without having

intelligence at the highest level. Therefore, humanity must put aside the definition of man as a rational (intelligent) being.

By claiming that faith, hope, and love are essential elements of human existence without which mankind's living on this planet would be seen as meaningless. Mankind should direct its efforts to discover the various dimensions of the soul. The soul encompasses not only what are called feelings and emotions, but man's senses and perception as well. It is hard to say whether thought is part of the soul or not. Traditionally, the intellect and the soul have been discussed separately. At any rate, the presence of the soul in every human being is beyond doubt; there is no human without a soul. The inference then led to the question, whether the soul is completely detached from the body, or if they are somehow connected. As it seems, the soul and the body exist in harmony: the soul feels the pain of the body, and the good (healthy) physical condition of the body provides the soul with the necessary peace and opportunity to deal with its matters (i.e., without distracting it from them). When one is healthy and in good condition, one's thoughts run smoothly and one can focus on specific problems which otherwise he/she would have ignored. This is the mysterious connection between soul and body, between spirit and matter- a relation which remains inexplicable for modern science. The Gnostic rejection of the body and everything material is harmful: the body should be the temple of the soul, and not its prison. The radical dualism is both illogical and empirically repudiated. Here one has to rely on the traditional Christian teaching which defines man as consisting of soul and body, coexisting harmoniously.

Even these considerations do not suffice to complete mankind's definition of human nature. The very fact that man confesses a given faith, meaning a belief in the reality of a Supreme Being (whether it is the Creator or not) indicates that there is a need to comprehend

man in a broader context. The belief in God is an essential part of mankind's living. Even atheists are affected somehow by the belief of their parents, friends, teachers, colleagues, and so forth. Faith is of primary importance for mankind! The object of faith is God as defined by the theologians. Now, a complete definition of human nature is as follows: man strives to reunite with God, to become One with God. Whether mankind understands God in the Christian sense or the context of another religion, this postulate cannot be denied. There is such disposition in man and it is part of human nature. This disposition that is called spirit, or spirituality. Now, man cannot be completely defined without turning to God. Man is God's image; but man was created. This is an assumption which repudiates the popular nowadays theory of the origin of man. Instead of comprehending man as a completely natural being originating from apes, humanity has to see man as both a rational and spiritual being striving to attain to God. This is the most realistic and adequate picture of man's essence.

It can be objected that this approach is strictly theological, therefore this is not anthropology but rather theology. However, the problem of God's reality and His attributes has not been discussed in the present report. All that was asserted about Him is the fact that man can be understood in his relationship with God. Here it was not intended to discuss God's existence; it does not need to be disputed with atheists or materialists. The meaning and place of the idea of God in human life is indisputable. Still, it is not claimed that the theory exposed here covers only the Christian anthropology in the fullest sense of the term. There are critical philosophical considerations which widen the scope of the report. The report itself shows that the dialogue between theology and philosophy regarding human nature is possible and even fruitful. Instead of controversy, there should be cooperation between both. Evidently, there could not be a

complete analysis of human nature, since man remains a mystery in some sense. Words will never suffice to describe all sides and dimensions of man's nature.

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